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### Unravelling the Baltic Sea Conundrum

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## Acronyms

AC	Arctic Council
AER	Assembly of the European Regions
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BA	Baltic Assembly
BASTUN	Baltic Sea Trade Union Network
BCCA	Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association
BCM	Baltic Council of Ministers
BDF	Baltic Development Forum
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
BEEGS	Baltic and East European Graduate School
BEN	Baltic Euroregional Network
BRN	Baltic Rim Network
BSC	Baltic Sea Commission
BSF	Baltic Sea Forum (Pro Baltica)
BSR	Baltic Sea Region
BSRI	Baltic Sea Region Initiative
BSSSC	Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation
BTC	Baltic Sea Tourism Commission
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CCB	Coalition Clean Baltic
CDDRL	Stanford Centre on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law
CEBAST	Centre for Baltic Sea Region Studies
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CoR	Committee of the Regions
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSO	Committee of Senior Officials
CT	Comparative Theory
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
E.S.D.P.	European Spatial Development Perspective
EC/EEC	European Communities/European Economic Community
ECPR	European Consortium for Political Research
EE/EST	Estonia
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIoP	European Integration Online Papers
EIPA	European Institute of Public Administration
EIT	European Integration Theory
EMU	European Monetary Union
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EPJ	embedded projects
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
EU ND/ND	EU Northern Dimension
EU-ISS	European Institute for Security Studies



GAERC	General Affairs and External Relations Council
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GRI	grass root initiatives
HDI	Human Development Index
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission
IFI	International Financial institutions
IGA	intergovernmental associations
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
IR/IRT	International Relations/International Relations Theory
IRE	international regimes
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
NATO	Northern Atlantic Treaties Organisation
NB8	Nordic-Baltic-Eight
ND AP	Northern Dimension Action Plan
NDEP	Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership
NDI	Northern Dimension Initiative
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
NIFIN	Nordic Institute in Finland
NL	The Netherlands
NNI	New Neighbourhood Instrument
NORDI	Northern Dimension Research Centre
NRA	New Regionalism Approach
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Aid for Restructuring of the Economies
PJ	self-organising projects
PfP	Partnership for Peace
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory
SEA	Single European Act
TACIS	Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFCMA	Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance
TNA	transnational associations
UBC	Union of the Baltic Cities
US/USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VASAB	Visions and Strategies about the Baltic
WZB	<i>Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin</i>

Swede	Generally, Sweden is a safe country, but for one thing. Beware of the Finns.
Me Swede	Seriously? ( <i>perplexed</i> ) Why? ...because they all carry jack-knives, and when they are drunk... ( <i>exit</i> )
Me (first Finn I met) Finn	Do you have a jack-knife? Ha! Of course not. But go ahead, ask a Swede! I'm sure he'll have one... and when he's drunk...

(Episode based on a true event)

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The historical events between 1989 and 1991 made way to a lively process of region-building across the previous East-West divide, whose dynamics have often been referred to as the 'Nordic Boom', the rise of the 'New North' or 'New Regionalism'. In the early 1990s, a sheer countless variety of regional initiatives, associations, and councils emerged, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) and the Baltic Development Forum (BDF), to name just a few examples. Over the last one or two decades, Northern Europe has turned into, as Bailes put it, "a veritable laboratory of innovative ways of dealing with the divisive nature of borders."<sup>2</sup> In fact, progressive regionalist cohesion has considerably blurred the old dividing lines of the Cold War and rendered the region a less rigid political landscape. These regional dynamics have also changed the outside view on what is perceived to be 'Northern'. Today, as a result, 'Northernness' is no longer exclusively allocated to the 'far up North'. Throughout the last one or two decades, the Northern European centre of gravity has remarkably shifted southwards, with the Baltic Sea becoming its very heart and main point of reference. Before 1989, regional cooperation in Northern Europe was quite exclusive since it was mainly restricted to the Nordic sphere and the so-called 'Old North' comprising the five Nordic States Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland. The regionalist dynamics newly arising in the early 1990s included instead also the southern part of the Baltic Sea meaning the three Baltic States, and to some extent Poland and Northern Germany. The changing regional power balances in Northern Europe materialised in the form of new institutional constructs and policy practices.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 The author would like to thank Gernot Stimmer and Dieter Segert (University of Vienna) as well as two anonymous reviewers for their comments and recommendations on the draft manuscript.
  - 2 See BAILES Alyson: The Role of Subregional Co-operation in the Post Cold War Europe. Integration, Security, Democracy. In: COTTEY Andrew (ed.): Subregional Co-operation in Post Cold War Europe. London 1998, pp. 153-185, here p. 183.
  - 3 See FAWCETT Louise: Regionalism from a Historical Perspective. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): Global Politics and Regionalism. London 2005, pp. 21-37, here p. 30.

Today, the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) features an extremely high concentration of cooperative structures. They add up to a tight network of cooperative arrangements that all label themselves as 'Baltic' or at least, define themselves as closely affiliated to the BSR. They do not only differ in terms of membership pattern and institutional setup, they also cover a wide array of functional areas, each of them pursuing diverse albeit often related objectives and strategic visions. Baltic Sea Regionalism occurs at different levels of action, and therefore involves various types of actors. State-level cooperation certainly plays a central role in regard to the overall development of regionalism in the BSR, as governmental action often provides for the basic conditions of proactive regional, sub-regional and also non-official cooperation. The political changes of 1989/90 have not least opened new opportunities for the nation states in the region to realign their geopolitical position and to strike new paths in their regional orientation. To some extent, regional cooperation made it possible for the BSR state actors to anticipate the integrative political ramifications of the European project. This applied most particularly to the Nordic States bordering the Baltic Sea, namely Sweden and Finland, and to the Baltic States, i.e. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The independence of the Baltic States from the Soviet Union, the political changes in Poland as well as the enlargements of the European Union (EU) in 1995 and 2004, have decisively changed the geo-political landscape in the northern part of the European continent. In 1995, Sweden and Finland were the first states in the region to become full EU member states, the three Baltic States and Poland followed in 2004. These events turned the Baltic Sea almost into an inland sea of the EU. In various different ways, the development of the BSR and Baltic Sea Regionalism has always been related to the European integration process. Generally, the EU had more of an indirect impact on the region, most of all through the enlargement process and the changing membership pattern in the area. However, at a certain point, the EU also became more directly involved in terms of specific policy provisions for this aspiring region. Since late 1997, when these ideas first appeared on the official EU working agenda, it was tried to evolve a comprehensive political framework for the EU external and cross-border activities in the BSR, which later turned out to become the so-called 'Northern Dimension of the EU' (EU ND).<sup>4</sup>

Some years have passed since the 'rise' of Baltic Sea Regionalism commenced in the early 1990s, and since the BSR was swept by a wave of enthusiasm and 'regionalist' hilarity. Not least, the 2004 EU enlargement round has certainly changed the circumstances for both trans-national networking in the BSR and the EU's regarding policies. These considerations build the point of departure for this study.

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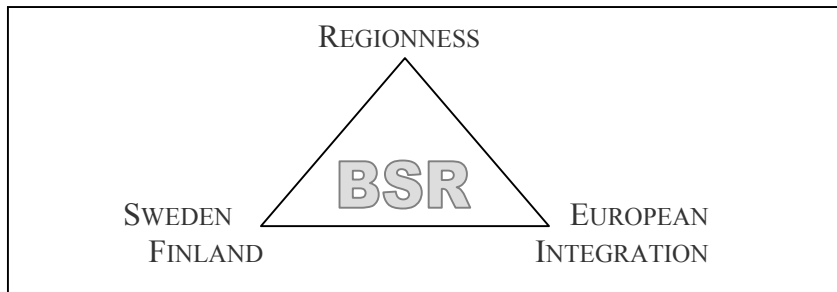
4 Hereinafter, this specific EU policy is referred to as "Northern Dimension" written in capital letters (or as EU ND in short form). If written otherwise, the term is used in a wider context.

## Chapter 1: Overview, Purpose and Background

### *A. Outline and Main Objective*

It is the primary objective of this study to grasp at least part of the pluridimensional intricacy of Baltic Sea Regionalism, and to unravel the conundrum behind the distinct regionalist tendencies that have characterized the BSR since the end of the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> The study does not aim at drawing an overall analytical picture of the region but focuses exclusively on the specific empirical phenomenon of regionalism and subregionalism in the BSR, its relationship with the broader framework of European integration, and the role national actors play in this regard. A comparison between Sweden and Finland as between two major regional stakeholders is intended to provide empirical reference for the interrelation between the supranational arena of European integration and the regionalist dimension of Baltic Sea cooperation and networking.

The Swedish and the Finnish case appear to be most significant for this purpose, as although they are very similar in many respects, such as concerning their geopolitical position or their joint accession to the EU, their strategic reaction to certain decisive events, such as the 2004 enlargements, has been rather contrarious. The fact that the two countries recently made diverging political choices despite their apparent similarities supports the choice of a comparative approach as well as the selection of these two cases. Taking these analytical aspects together, the focus of this study is trifold: the BSR as a region of its own (the Baltic Sea 'regionness'), the EU as an overall framework for regionalist activities and initiatives in the BSR, and Finland and Sweden as regional stakeholders and member states of the EU.



**Figure 1: Analytical Cornerstones of the Study**

The study seeks to elaborate on each of the above cornerstones as well as on the relationship between them. It mainly aims to clarify the conceptual basics of regionalism and regional integration, single out the virtual linkages between the different analytical factors at stake, develop typologies, and not least, open new ways of looking at regionalism and integration by discussing how the phenomenon could be incorporated theoretically.

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5 A previous version of this study was submitted as a doctoral thesis in Comparative Politics at the University of Vienna, Austria.

### *B. Relevance of the Topic – Europe in a Nutshell*

Northern Europe and the BSR are traditionally considered as part of the European periphery, that is, the margins of an alleged European ‘centre’ or ‘core’. Generally, academic conceptions often doubt about the relevance political processes in so-called ‘peripheral’ regions potentially have for EU politics and the further development of the European project as a whole and thus, neglect several related factors in the course of their analysis or theory construction.<sup>6</sup> Even studies that claim to offer a global view on Europe’s geo-political landscape often neglect the politico-strategic impact impulses from the ‘margins’ might have on the ‘centre’. Also in the general discourse of International Relations (IR), geographical remoteness is often equated with political marginality. Tómas Ingi Olrich found a clear albeit very sarcastic way to describe this common perspective:

The North is marginal and will remain so. Its position is marginal in the geographical and geological sense, since it is perceived by the major players of world politics as a frontier post or back garden, if it isn’t simply regarded as no-man’s land.<sup>7</sup>

This study, however, builds on the assumption that the political development in the BSR is of decisive importance for the development of the European project and the course of the integration process as a whole. It is contended that (sub)regional dynamics potentially influence or even sideline macro-level integration and thus, are likely to affect and determine the course and finality of the overall process.

From my point of view, the geo-strategic importance of the BSR in today’s Europe is virtually indisputable. During the Cold War period, it was an area of relatively low tension and little political action.<sup>8</sup> However, with the fall of the unnatural division of the Iron Curtain the region (re)gained its key position in the European geo-strategic landscape. The Baltic Sea has returned to being a uniting rather than a dividing element for its littoral states.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the past two decades, the countries in the region have shown enormous potential to overcome the political and economic cleavages of the past. However, numerous challenges have remained, next to new ones that have emerged in the course of political transition in the southeastern BSR. This study builds on the assumption that the way the EU member states in the BSR decide to tackle these challenges does not only determine their own role as politico-strategic actors in the region but is also highly significant if not symptomatic for their conduct as member states of the European Union.

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6 Browning provides a positive exception in this regard. See BROWNING Christopher S. (ed.): *Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements*. Aldershot 2005.

7 OLRICH Tómas Ingi: *Implementation of a Northern Dimension*. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): *North meets North. Proceedings of the First Northern Research Forum*, held in Akureyri and Bessastaðir, Iceland. 4-6 November 2002, pp. 119-121, here p. 119.

8 During the Cold War, the Nordic countries consciously tried to keep the political tension in the region as low as possible. “Finland’s cautious policy of coexistence, Sweden’s neutrality, and Norway’s and Denmark’s footnotes to their NATO membership all played a reinforcing role in diminishing pressure in the Nordic-Baltic region.” PERRY Charles M./SWEENEY Michael J./WINNER Andrew C. (eds): *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region. Implications for US Policy*. Dulles 2000, p. 121.

9 See HYDE-PRICE Adrian: *NATO and the Baltic Sea Region: Towards Regional Security Governance? NATO Research Fellowship Scheme 1998-2000. Final Report*, p. 3.

With the EU accession of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the Baltic Sea has almost become an inland sea of the EU, as today it is flanked by eight of its Member States. Some have even referred to the Baltic Sea as being the 'European Sea' (lat. *Mare Europaeum*).<sup>10</sup> In fact, there are many seas surrounding Europe, but the Baltic Sea is the only one fully surrounded by Europe.<sup>11</sup> In recent years, the EU border to Russia has lengthened significantly. The EU's future external relations to Russia will to a large extent be set in this region, because it forms the area where the fundamental strategic interests of both Russia and the EU intersect in many respects.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever you call it, there's a buzz about the Baltic. What was until recently little more than a heavily polluted body of water divided by a Baltic Wall has rapidly evolved into the most dynamic, politically unified region of Europe, and an area responsible for 15 percent of the world's trade.<sup>13</sup>

Even Samuel P. Huntington drew his world-renowned 'Velvet Curtain', the Eastern border of Western Civilization, right through the BSR and underlined its crucial role in the geo-strategic landscape.

The most significant dividing line in Europe may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500. This line runs along what are now the boundaries between Finland and Russia and between the Baltic states and Russia, cuts through Belarus and Ukraine separating the more Catholic western Ukraine from Orthodox eastern Ukraine, swings westward separating Transylvania from the rest of Romania, and then goes through Yugoslavia [...].<sup>14</sup>

Taking all the political dynamics of the recent years, the BSR may be seen as some sort of "representative cross-section of today's Europe".<sup>15</sup> The unique composition of cultures, identities and political traditions we find in the BSR somehow makes the region a microcosmic version of pan-European relations.<sup>16</sup> This is not least applicable to the post Cold War and post enlargement development of both the European project and the course of Baltic Sea Regionalism.

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10 TASSINARI Fabrizio: *Mare Europaeum. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe*. Copenhagen 2004.

11 See Baltic Study Net. Introduction to the Baltic Summer School *Mare Europaeum*, Berlin 23 July – 6 August 2006. Website of the Centre for Baltic Sea Region Studies (CEBAST) [www.balticstudies.org](http://www.balticstudies.org) [27 September 2007].

12 See MOSHES Arkady: The Eastern Neighbours of the European Union as an Opportunity for Nordic Actors. In: Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS): Working Paper, No. 12/06, p. 3.

13 SANDER Gordon: Off Centre. Baltic hands link across a troubled sea. In: *Financial Times*, 8 April 2000.

14 HUNTINGTON Samuel P.: The Clash of Civilizations? In: *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, pp. 22-34, here p. 25.

15 Baltic Study Net. Introduction to the Baltic Summer School *Mare Europaeum*, Berlin 23 July – 6 August 2006. Website of the Centre for Baltic Sea Region Studies (CEBAST) [www.balticstudies.org](http://www.balticstudies.org) [27 September 2007].

16 See HYDE-PRICE Adrian: NATO and the Baltic Sea Region. Towards Regional Security Governance? NATO Research Fellowship Scheme 1998-2000. Final Report, p. 4. See also HUBEL Helmut: The Baltic Dimension of European Unification. In: LÄHTEENMÄKI Kaisa (ed.): *Dimensions of Cooperation and Conflict in the Baltic Sea Rim*. Tampere 1994, pp. 57-67, here p. 59.

[The BSR] connects ‘old’ with ‘new’ Europeans inside the European Union, and with Russia, outside the EU. It links Europe’s wealthiest societies with some of the continent’s poorest regions, and it combines some of the most matured democracies in Europe with some of the youngest. Studying the Baltic Sea Region thus means getting acquainted with Europe in a nutshell.<sup>17</sup>

Since the end of the Cold War, many cooperative arrangements on the regional and sub-regional level have emerged. Given this high concentration and structural diversity of regional cohesiveness, the BSR can be considered the most networked, if not the most complex region in the New Europe.

### C. *State of Research*

#### I. *Looking Back – ‘Northern’ Issues in European Political Science*

When trying to assess the presence of ‘Northern’ issues on the European Political Science agenda, one must clearly differ between research based in and around the region *versus* research that was and is being conducted by experts based outside the region. In BSR-based academia, regional affairs naturally retain an entrenched and close to permanent position on the research agenda. Their presence on ‘foreign’ agendas in turn highly depends upon international trends and global developments. After 1989/90, Northern Europe and the BSR gained exceptional attention from ‘outside’, with the uncertain outcome of the post-Soviet transition process being the ‘crowd puller’ in the academic world. Heininen referred to this wave of awareness and academic interest as the “Arctic boom” in IR studies.<sup>18</sup> The essential geo-strategic and political changes in Northern Europe, and particularly in the BSR after the end of the Cold War, could not go unnoticed by the international academic community. Both BSR-based analysts and ‘outsiders’ have made extensive research efforts in order to study the potential consequences of the changing political and security environment around the Baltic Sea. Indeed, the main empirical focus of this study, which is the phenomenon of distinct regionalist tendencies in the BSR, made up one of the most prominent research subjects during the 1990s. However, after the first decade, this ‘booming’ academic awareness gradually started to decline. After the 2004 enlargements, and once the field of BSR studies had been substantially ‘balticised’, the academic attention drew again back to the regional research arena.

The event of Norway’s second negative referendum in 1994, and the Swedish and Finnish EU accessions in 1995, attracted a lot of public and academic attention both inside and outside the region. In the long run, however, this enlargement round generally had a negative impact on the standing of BSR issues on the European integration research agenda. The Swedish and Finnish EU membership was seen as a major achievement for the stabilisation of the northeastern sphere, with the two new member states attaining the function of regional promoters of ‘Europeanness’.

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17 Baltic Study Net, Berlin 23 July – 6 August 2006. Website of the Centre for Baltic Sea Region Studies (CEBAST) [www.balticstudies.org](http://www.balticstudies.org) [27 September 2007].

18 HEININEN Lassi: Ideas and Outcomes. Finding a Concrete Form for the Northern Dimension Initiative. In: OJANEN Hanna (ed.): The Northern Dimension. Fuel for the EU? Kauhava 2001, pp. 20-53, here p. 20.

Hence, once this enlargement round was concluded, both political awareness and academic interest gradually moved back to other, more vibrant regional issues, e.g. the peace process on the Balkans. The Finnish policy initiative that introduced the so-called 'Northern Dimension' in 1997 did cause another wave of scholarly interest from outside, which however, did not last very long. The next, and for the time being, last 'hype' about specific BSR matters in IR emerged in the years preceding the Baltic and Polish accessions to the EU, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) respectively.

In the public debate, the 2004 enlargement round was mostly discussed as an issue of its own, and thus, was not directly related to the regional development of the Baltic Sea as a region. Moreover, the EU accession of the three Baltic countries was seen as a major turn in their respective political orientation. As a result, the heated debate about Baltic post-communist transition gradually declined, which then moved the spotlight more to the East and the South, or at least, *away* from the North. A similar effect can be ascribed to the introduction of a Neighbourhood Policy for the European Union, and the promoted vision of constructing a 'ring of friends' around the Western European community. Even though some have claimed that the shift of the EU's geopolitical focus towards the East could open a window of opportunity for the Nordic states to become 'project managers' in this ambitious undertaking, the fact that a specific agenda for the North is recently losing momentum cannot be denied.<sup>19</sup>

## *II. Mapping Out the White Spots on the Research Agenda*

The body of scholarly knowledge about BSR issues is vast and widely developed in all related academic disciplines, most notably in Political Science, Human Geography and Economics. While the academic interest coming from 'outsiders', i.e. non-BSR-based research institutions or individuals, has always been symptomatically low, the BSR-based academic landscape has brought about a large stock of expertise.<sup>20</sup> Generally, much has been written about the socio-economic development and the changing political conditions in the area. Also the historical and geographical questions, e.g. the question of Kaliningrad or of border demarcation with Russia, have gained considerable attention. Anyway, a large part of BSR studies deal with the region as a matter of its own, describing and analysing, e.g. the internal dynamics of regionalism, or the inherent patterns of regional and sub-regional co-operation. Only few of them have tried to link the regional specificities at hand to the broader framework of European integration, and, more interestingly, to the question of finality and the potential outcome of the European integration process.

While most issues about the region itself are covered by substantial academic contributions, more could have been done on a more abstract level, in the sense of a theoretical incorporation and typology of the empirical characteristics of the region and the systemic frame. One important aspect that has been largely neglected up until now is the potential contrariety between the perpetual existence and functioning of an integrative unit like the EU at the macro-level and the simultaneous and progressive

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19 See MOSHES Arkady: *The Eastern Neighbours of the European Union as an Opportunity for Nordic Actors*, DIIS Working Paper, No. 12/2006. Copenhagen 2006, p. 7.

20 However, this is not to discredit the value of external analyses that have recently been brought into the field, e.g. BROWNING Christopher (ed.): *Remaking Europe in the Margins*. Aldershot 2005.



build-up of some sort of meso-level regional and subregional agenda or even counterpart. The effectiveness and positive performance of the EU, as of any other international organisation, highly depends on the constructive attitude and ideational solidarity of its member states. The question of the disintegrative impact that, for example, regional self-centeredness of single member states could have on the European Union as a political project should be considered more explicitly in academic studies that deal with region-building and regionalist developments. Scholars have found very flowery phrases to describe the regionalist dynamics, the “myriads”<sup>21</sup> of cooperative ventures that have “mushroomed”<sup>22</sup> “in the name of the Baltic world.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, countless papers and case studies about the BSR have taken the phenomenon of Baltic Sea Regionalism as a starting point for analysis. However, only few of them have suggested some sort of classification that would first help to systemise the high number of different associations and initiatives and thus, to grasp the structural diversity at hand.<sup>24</sup>

#### D. Methodological Approach

##### I. Working Material and Information Retrieval

Undertaking a study about ‘regionness’ including regional self-definition and identity as an outsider, which means in this case, as a European but non-Scandinavian and non-Baltic as well as an academic that is not based in the region, to some extent always raises the question of credibility and originality. One must always be aware of the risk of producing an external view without sufficiently taking into account certain societal and ideological factors, which might indeed be crucial for an overall understanding of the regional specificities. This is why I consciously tried to especially consider the written sources produced *in* the region, most importantly in Scandinavia and the Baltic States, including daily press and official documents by governmental and other authorities. Even though most official documents as well as a great part of the academic literature are available in English, it generally proved useful to include Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic sources as well. The collection of Scandinavian material was mainly conducted in the course of two sojourns (in 2005 and 2007) at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) in Huddinge (S) and at the *A. Lindh Centrum* for Defence, Security and Foreign Policy situated at the Swedish Defence College (*Försvarshögskolan*) in Stockholm (S). Major sources of information were also found at the European Documentation Centre/European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht (NL).

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21 VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 23.

22 SCOTT James Wesley: Cross-border Governance in the Baltic Sea Region. In: ANDERSON James/O'DOWD Liam/WILSON Thomas M. (eds): *New Borders for a Changing Europe. Cross-border Cooperation and Governance*. London 2002, pp. 135-153, here p. 135.

23 LEHTI Marko: Competing or Complementary Images. The North and the Baltic World from the Historical Perspective. In: HAUKKALA Hiski (ed.): *Dynamic Aspects of the Northern Dimension*. Turku 1999, pp. 2-28, here p. 23.

24 One of those rare examples can be found in KERN Kristine: *Voller Dynamik: Der Ostseeraum. Governance jenseits des Nationalstaats*. In: *Mitteilungen des Wissenschaftszentrums Berlin*, Nr. 106, p. 45-47.

Details about the single cooperative formations in the region as laid out in the annex of this study were partly collected on the basis of direct requests to the respective secretariat or administrative board. The collection of relevant information also comprised a series of informal explorative interviews with selected EU officials as well as with experts from relevant international think tanks such as, for example, Hiski Haukkala, Researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs/*Ulkopoliittisen instituutin* in Helsinki (FI), and Arūnas Molis, Head of the Eastern Countries Monitoring Division at the Centre for Strategic Studies/*Strateginių studijų centras* in Vilnius (LT).<sup>25</sup> The working material mainly comprised secondary literature (textbooks, relevant periodicals and scholarly journals), journalistic (daily and weekly press) as well as primary sources, such as official EU-documents, constitutive declarations and statutes of regional and sub-regional associations.

## II. Research Strategy

This study follows an issue and problem-oriented research strategy. The empirical phenomenon of regionalism in the BSR builds the point of departure, and remains the centre of reference throughout the whole analytical process. Instead of presenting a compound theoretical framework at the beginning to frame the focus of analytical perception, the study follows an inverted structure, in which the theoretical incorporation and abstraction of Baltic Sea Regionalism, of the Baltic Sea Conundrum, constitutes the ultimate step in the research process. The consideration behind this strategic choice is that the present stock of theories does not offer any approach that would perfectly suit and accommodate the specificities of the very research questions investigated in this study. As the most appropriate theoretical model is expected to involve a *combination of* existing theoretical models, the study seeks to reconcile various traditions of thought alongside the demands posed by the empirical subject matter. The underlying motivation is mainly to provide a theoretical basis for future empirical contributions to the field without necessarily opting for any single approach to explain a limited range of questions. The study also refrains from testing certain pre-given hypotheses, which is supported by the fact that many aspects of the empirical phenomenon concerned are not immediately manifest and testable in the narrow sense. The study first locates the BSR case conceptually within the broad range of 'regionalisms', which include various different forms of collective organisation or networking focusing on a specific region or spatial entity. Descriptive elaborations on the emergence and development of Baltic Sea Regionalism prepare for the issue-driven discussion of various strands of theory, namely European Integration Theory (EIT), International Relations Theory (IRT) as well as Comparative Theory (CT). The overview gained from this assessment builds the basis for the concluding remarks on the 'abstractability' of the subject matter. The practical aim of the theoretical section (chapter 4) is to track the explanatory value and potential shortcomings of selected approaches in the face of the analytical perspective of this study, and thereby, to provide useful reference for further discussions about the theoretical incorporation of Baltic Sea Regionalism, and for future empirical studies dealing with the phenomenon.

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25 Most interview partners declined to be cited directly. Their contributions mainly influenced the overall arrangement of the study but did not add any content that would have to be quoted in detail.

### *E. Preliminary Assumptions, Research Questions and Structure*

As laid out above, this study focuses on three analytical cornerstones: (1) the Baltic Sea Region and Baltic Sea Regionalism, (2) Sweden and Finland as two major regional stakeholders and EU member states, and accordingly, (3) the EU as an overall framework and macro-level reference. The analytical aim is to elaborate on each of these points, and to analyse the interrelations between them on the basis of the following assumptions:<sup>26</sup>

#### (1) The Baltic Sea Region and Baltic Sea Regionalism:

The empirical point of reference for this study is the *specific structural nature* of the Baltic Sea region. This thematic focus is based on the following presumptions:

- Since 1989, a variety of regionalist formations have emerged in Northern Europe.
- These regionalist dynamics particularly concentrated in the BSR, and eventually, turned this region into the centre of gravity of Northern Europe.
- Today's BSR features a remarkably high density and variety of cooperative arrangements, such as regional councils, associations and initiatives. Therefore, it can be regarded as one of Europe's most 'networked' regions.
- It is assumed that this particular characteristic has an impact on the foreign policy orientation of nation states situated in the region. Hence, it is regarded as a highly significant factor influencing their conduct as EU member states.
- The analysis of regionalism offers good opportunities for the evaluation of the integrative attitude of single EU member states.

There is a certain tendency in IR to regard transnational regionalism as some sort of natural process that results from the fact of mere geographical closeness. Most often, according to this perception, regions have the connotation as something self-evident, secondary and marginal. In contrast thereto, this study is based on the assumption that

- Regionalism, and most importantly, the degree of regional cohesion, has to be considered as rather being an option than a matter of course.

#### (2) Sweden and Finland as major regional stakeholders and EU member states:

- The foreign policy orientation of Sweden and Finland shows a particularly strong adherence to the immediate neighbourhood, and most importantly, the BSR.
- This alleged regional affixedness is a typical peculiarity of small states in general, and most particularly, of small states situated in a peripheral position.
- The impact of regionalist structures on their external and European policy conduct is likely to be stronger than in bigger continental BSR countries (e.g. Germany).
- Despite many similarities, their EU membership profiles are basically different.
- While Sweden has been traditionally reluctant to integrate fully into the EU, Finland has been rather pragmatic in its performance and conduct as a member.
- This difference is likely to be reflected on the regional scene and the strategic conduct of these two states in various different regionalist matters and contexts.

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26 The preliminary assumptions that guide the analysis partly reflect the findings of previous research conducted in the context of previous research on European Integration and Neutrality. See GEBHARD Carmen: *Europäische Integration und Neutralität. Österreich und Schweden im Vergleich*. Diplomarbeit Vienna 2004.

(3) The EU as an overall framework and macro-level reference:

- The European integration process has always influenced the political setting in Northern Europe, and most particularly, in the BSR.
- However, the EU's impact on the development of the BSR was and is limited.
- The adoption of the EU Northern Dimension (EU ND) was closely connected to the then upcoming Eastern and Northeastern enlargement.
- The completion of the 2004 enlargements has shifted the regional and sub-regional focus of the EU to other regions in Europe.

The study consists of three main sections. The first section (chapter 2) introduces the geo-political terminology and some case-specific features of the Baltic Sea Region, and elaborates on the conceptualisation of 'regionness' and 'regionalism' respectively. To this end, it focuses on the following research questions:

- Which labels are commonly used to denominate geo-political entities in Northern Europe and how do they relate to each other?
- What accounts for Baltic Sea 'regionness'? What makes the BSR a 'region'?
- Which political and geographical features determine the character of the BSR?
- How do all these BSR specificities influence the way the region is seen from outside? How can the structural specificities of the BSR be conceptualised?
- How and on what grounds did Baltic Sea Regionalism emerge after 1989?
- How did the newly emerging cooperative structures interact with other (established) formations in the 'Old North', such as classic 'Nordic Cooperation'?
- What kinds of cooperative undertakings emerged in the context of the 'rise of the New North'? How can they be categorised?

The second section (chapter 3) deals with the broader EU approach towards Northern Europe, focussing in particular on the EU ND and the regional policy orientation of Sweden and Finland in this respect. This section tries to cover the following questions:

- How is the EU approach towards the European North composed? Which policies and instruments does the EU employ to have an impact on the region?
- What steps have been taken while developing and implementing the EU ND?
- How do the EU's regional policies relate to the (sub) regional arrangements?
- How has the changing EU membership pattern in the region influenced the EU's actorness towards the North?
- How do Sweden and Finland define their geo-political position in the region?
- What role did the two regional stakeholders take over in the course of the EU ND establishment and implementation process?
- To what extent do they pursue similar or divergent interests in this context?
- What effects did the 2004 enlargements have on the regional orientation of the two?
- To what extent does the regional policy conduct of Sweden and Finland reflect the specificities of their EU membership, and more generally, of their orientation in European integration affairs (reluctance? activism? passivity?)?

The third section (chapter 4) addresses the question how the research matter could be interpreted on a more abstract and theoretical level. The annex of this study contains a detailed catalogue of the most important associations and cooperative structures based in the BSR.

## Chapter 2: Regional and Sub-Regional Co-operation in Northern Europe

### A. *Geo-political Labels in Northern Europe*

The coastal states of the Baltic Sea can all be attributed to different regional dependencies, as for instance the ‘North’, ‘Scandinavia’, the ‘Baltic’, or more generally, ‘Northern Europe’. Confusingly, there is also a variety of meanings attached to each of these geopolitical labels. In fact, in every day parlance and in most political and cultural contexts, the various terms are usually adopted without questioning their exact meaning. Anyway, their inherent logic of inclusion and exclusion can be a rather sensitive issue. That is particularly true for expressions that denominate groupings of states (e.g. the ‘Baltic countries’)<sup>27</sup>, and thus, go far beyond mere geographical classifications. Notions of this type do not only suggest some sort of inclusiveness, they eventually imply also a certain degree of cohesiveness that goes beyond the nation state level. If imposed from the outside, they are what Marko Lehti called “a strong tool of othering” whose adoption might, in some cases be perceived as an act of “marginalisation”.<sup>28</sup> These labels all have various readings that result from different historical and political contexts. Therefore, the categories used by exponents from the Baltic States (i.e. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) naturally differ from those used by Swedes, Norwegians or Russians. Moreover, there are also divergent understandings to be found *within* single countries according to the respective ideological perspective or historical consciousness. An exhaustive discussion of the regarding terminological discourses would certainly go beyond the scope of this chapter. The following section rather aims at outlining the problem and eventually defining the geopolitical terminology applied hereinafter.

### I. *Northern Europe, Scandinavia and the North*

From an outside perspective, ‘Northern Europe’ is generally conceived as consisting of the so-called Scandinavian countries, i.e. Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland (and less often, also Denmark). As a result, the terms ‘Northern Europe’, ‘North’ and ‘Scandinavia’ are often used synonymously, even though Northern Europe covers a much wider area comprising Scandinavia (plus Denmark),<sup>29</sup> Northwest Russia, Northern Germany and Poland as well as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. There is also a difference between the term ‘Scandinavia’,<sup>30</sup> which generally refers to the Scandinavian Peninsula, i.e. mainland Norway and Sweden, and the wider concept of cultural

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27 See HOLT Kristoffer: *Rapport. Stockholms andra internationella skandinavistsymposium. Hur Nordiskt är Baltikum?* 21-22 augusti 2006. Stockholm 2006, p. 17.

28 LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): *Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe*. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 69.

29 In this context, Denmark includes the autonomous territories of Faroe Islands and Greenland, and Finland includes Åland Island.

30 ‘Scandinavia’ is derived from the ancient term “Scandia”, which dates back to the descendants of Ashkenaz (Noah’s grandson, Genesis 10:3). Known as the Askaeni, they were the first people to migrate to Northern Europe introducing the country’s name “Ascania”. Latin and Greek writers called the land “Scandza” or “Scandia”. See GANNHOLM Tore: *The origin of Svear and their arrival into Lake Mälaren area in the 6th century*. Stånga 1996, p. 12.

‘Scandinavia’, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and conditionally, Finland. The closeness of languages is certainly one of the strongest arguments for the demarcation of socio-cultural ‘Scandinavia’: The three main Scandinavian languages (Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian) spin off from the language of Old Norse and build the Germanic Group of the Indo-European family. The same applies to Icelandic and Faroese, while Finnish, just as Estonian, does not belong to this family at all, but to the Finno-Ugrian languages. Latvian and Lithuanian together form the Baltic Indo-European Group.<sup>31</sup> While the linguistic argumentation seems to be fairly simple and clear, in political affairs, the occasional inclusion or exclusion of single countries, such as Iceland or Finland, from these geopolitical labels can be a rather sensitive matter.<sup>32</sup> In fact, some North Europeans could even take offence for being or not being classified as Scandinavians.<sup>33</sup> Sometimes even Estonia is considered a Scandinavian or Nordic country, referring to its cultural heritage and the close linguistic links to Finland.<sup>34</sup> There is yet another important expression that should be mentioned in this context. The geographic and geological notion of ‘Fennoscandia’ (also ‘Fenno-Scandinavia’) includes the Scandinavian Peninsula, Karelia, Finland and Denmark. In a cultural sense, Fennoscandia underlines the close historical link between Finnic, Sami and the Scandinavian peoples and cultures. Anyway, unlike the term ‘Nordic’, Fennoscandia does not include Iceland or other geographically disconnected overseas areas (e.g. Greenland). As for the EU perspective, Sweden and Finland, and occasionally, also Denmark are labelled as the ‘Scandinavian’ group of member states or simply as ‘Scandinavia’ – sometimes even misleadingly implying that they form some sort of political block within the Union. This study will eventually contribute to the reflection of whether and to what extent the conditions apply to this sort of global assumption.<sup>35</sup>

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- 31 See JAANSON Kaido: The Baltic States and Norden. In: The Baltic Review, Vol. 19. Online Edition. Website of the Journal ‘The Baltic Review’ [www.tbr.ee](http://www.tbr.ee) [12 August 2007]. Out of the group of the Nordic Five only Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have a truly common heritage from the early beginnings of recorded history. They have all been inhabited by the same Nordic-Teutonic race of peoples. In the course of the Viking expansions, as early as 900 A.D., Norse settlements were also founded on the Faroe Islands and Iceland. Only more than two centuries later, a different race of peoples with a distinct tribal and linguistic origin started to settle the Gulf of Finland and today’s Balticum, forming the basis for the Finnish and Estonian ethnic background. See BONNEN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Co-operation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 30 (note 2).
- 32 For more details, see JOENNIEMI Pertti/LEHTI Marko: On the encounter between the Nordic and the northern. Torn Apart but Meeting Again? COPRI Working Paper 11/2001.
- 33 Especially the Finns have a very distinct perception about where to draw this line and how to interpret the background of a common Scandinavian heritage. Finland did not share an important chapter of Scandinavian history, the so-called “Scandinavist movement” in mid-19th century. This political movement aimed at the creation of a Nordic defense alliance and even at the re-unification of the Scandinavian countries as a single state. At that time, Finland already found itself under the yoke of Russian dominance, and was thus reluctant to join the movement.
- 34 See KANARBIK Madis: *Skandinavistikens ställning i Baltikum*. In: HOLT Kristoffer: *Rapport. Stockholms andra internationella skandinavistsymposium. Hur Nordiskt är Baltikum? 21-22 augusti 2006*. Stockholm 2006, p. 14. The most important example in this regard is Meri Lennart, the former Estonian minister of foreign affairs, who repeatedly argued that Estonia had a distinct Scandinavian and Nordic inheritance. See e.g. MERI Lennart: *Eurooppa on Viron ohjelma*. In: *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2 December 1990.
- 35 See chapter “Nordic Togetherness – the Changing Role of Nordic Cooperation”, p. 61-.

## II. 'Nordic' vs. 'Northern'

The English expression 'Nordic Countries' (Swed. *nordiska länder*) is a neologism that was introduced in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Normally, it is perceived to comprise the Nordic group of five, i.e. Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland.<sup>36</sup> Most of the time, the English terms 'Nordic' and 'Northern' are used interchangeably, even though 'Nordic' has a clearly political connotation whereas 'northern' barely indicates the geographical position, and denominates a much wider area. 'Nordic', and 'Nordicness' respectively, are closely affiliated with the so-called 'Nordic Cooperation', a largely informal system of cooperation established between the above-mentioned 'Nordic Countries' after the end of the Second World War. Outside Scandinavia, there is normally also no distinction drawn between 'Nordic' and 'Scandinavian', although in the narrow sense of the term, 'Scandinavia' can only be applied collectively to the respective group of states, whereas the notion of a 'Nordic' sphere, again, implies some sort of cultural, ideological and political inclusiveness based in the traditional system of 'Nordic Cooperation'.<sup>37</sup> The 'North' as a noun is commonly used for the designation of the 'Nordic Countries', stemming from the Scandinavian equivalent '*Norden*' (Finn. *Pohjola*).<sup>38</sup> For Scandinavians themselves, this notion is rather clear, but especially for non-Europeans it is all the more opaque and therefore also less common. After the end of the Cold War, the political and ideological standing of 'Nordic Cooperation' gradually changed in respect to both the outside perspective and the self-perception of the Nordic States. The newly gained independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the newly arising tendencies of progressive regionalism in the BSR seemed to shift the focus of Northern European affairs southwards, challenging the traditional system of Nordic exclusiveness. To some extent the 'Old Nordic North' and the newly promoted 'Northernness' had become competing geopolitical concepts.<sup>39</sup>

## III. The 'Baltic States'

From the specific perspective of this study, it is important to differentiate the term 'Baltic Sea States', meaning the group of Baltic Sea littoral states, from the notion of 'Baltic States' (or also: '*Balticum*'), which is what Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are commonly referred to. The latter is a rather recent terminological invention that only emerged in the wake of the First World War. Before 1918, it was only used to

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36 In fact, it is a somewhat problematic translation of the Swedish term *nordisk*, which is often used in other (e.g. cultural) contexts. See HOLT Kristoffer: *Rapport. Stockholms andra internationella skandinavistsymposium. Hur Nordiskt är Baltikum? 21-22 augusti 2006*. Stockholm 2006, p. 17. The Nordic group includes three autonomous territories: the Faroe Islands, Greenland (both DK) and Åland (FI).

37 The system of Nordic Cooperation will be further elaborated in chapter "Nordic Togetherness – the Changing Role of Nordic Cooperation", p. 61-.

38 See The Nordic Council: The Swan Symbol and the Logotype Norden. Background information. Official Website of the Nordic Region [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org) [5 March 2008].

39 See JOENNIEMI Pertti/LEHTI Marko: On the encounter between the Nordic and the northern. Torn Apart but Meeting Again? Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI): Working Paper, 11/2001, p. 5-6. This very central issue of Nordic self-definition in the light of New Baltic Sea Regionalism will be taken up at another point in this study. See chapter "Old North vs. New Regionalism. Visions Competing for the Same Space?", p. 76-.

denominate the former Russian provinces of Estonia, Livonia and Courland.<sup>40</sup> Today, the collective label of ‘Baltic States’ as the ‘Baltic Three’ is not always appreciated by the concerning states themselves as it does not comply with their specific historical consciousness and geopolitical self-identification.<sup>41</sup>

#### *IV. Overview: The Geo-Political Terminology Used in this Study*

As so many terminologies are in use to structure the region and denominate certain parts of it, it seems important at this point, to clarify the terminology I am applying in the course of this study.

Nordic Countries	Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland
Northern Europe	European Russia, Northern Germany, Northern Poland, Scandinavia, Baltic States
Scandinavia	Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland
Scandinavian Baltic	Sweden, Denmark and Finland
Baltic Sea States	Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland
Baltic Sea Region	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, European Russia, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the German <i>Länder</i> of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen ( <i>Regierungsbezirk Lüneburg</i> ) <sup>42</sup>

**Table 1: The Geo-Political Terminology Applied in this Study**

#### *B. Northern Europe – Some General Characteristics and Features*

##### *I. BSR Specificities and Sensitivities*

In the last two decades, the geopolitical situation in the Baltic Sea area has changed drastically. The most important break in recent BSR history was certainly the fall of the east-west divide in 1989/90 – or as Sander called it – the “fall of the Baltic Wall”, involving independence for the Baltic States, the reunification of Germany and the conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia.<sup>43</sup> As from a geostrategic point of view, the specific importance of the BSR has been traditionally related to its unclear and therefore problematic Eastern delimitation.<sup>44</sup>

40 See MEDIJAINEN Eero: The Baltic Question in the Twentieth Century. Historiographic Aspects. In: AMELANG James S./BEER Siegfried (eds): Public Power in Europe. Studies in Historical Transformations. Pisa 2006, pp. 109-124, here p. 112.

41 See CAVE Andrew: Finding a Role in an Enlarged EU. In: Central Europe Review, Nr. 20. 22 May 2000. Online publication [www.ce-review.org](http://www.ce-review.org) [26 November 2007]. See chapter “The Baltic States and Baltic Unity – Imposition or Expedient?”, p. 67-.

42 This geographical definition of the BSR is also employed in the framework of EU structural initiatives (e.g. INTERREG).

43 See SANDER Gordon: Off Centre. Baltic hands link across a troubled sea. In: Financial Times, 8 April 2000.

44 See DELLENBRANT Jan Åke: The Baltic Sea Co-operation. Visions and Realities. In: BALDERSHEIM Harald/STÄHLBERG Krister (eds): Nordic Region-Building in a European Perspective. Aldershot 1999, pp. 83-97, here p. 85.



For the BSR there is no natural border to the East. While until the end of the Second World War, the Baltic Sea was not prominently perceived as a barrier in geostrategic terms but rather as a body of water that facilitated contacts between the shores, during the Cold War era it assumed this sort of grey or dead zone between opposing ideological systems. The geostrategic importance resulting from this unique position has not changed over recent decades. However, what has changed after the end of the Cold War is the nature of this old dividing line. "Fault lines between civilisations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as the flash points for crisis and blood-shed."<sup>45</sup> In his renowned model of clashing civilizations, Huntington maintained that the so-called 'Velvet Curtain' of cultural diversity, the Eastern border of Western Civilization, runs right through the BSR.

The most significant dividing line in Europe [...] may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500. This line runs along what are now the boundaries between Finland and Russia and between the Baltic states and Russia, cuts through Belarus and Ukraine separating the more Catholic western Ukraine from Orthodox eastern Ukraine, swings westward separating Transylvania from the rest of Romania, and then goes through Yugoslavia [...].<sup>46</sup>

Another factor that has decisively altered the geopolitical constellation in Northern Europe has been the progressing and enlarging European project as well as the process of transatlantic security integration. Today, the distribution of memberships in international organisations can be said to constitute a decisive albeit ambivalent structural component in the BSR. While the NATO membership pattern draws an intrinsic dividing line across the Baltic Sea Rim, with the states alongside the lower Baltic region being full NATO-member states, and the Baltic North still pertaining to the block of permanently neutral or non-aligned states,<sup>47</sup> EU membership rather constitutes a uniting factor for the BSR. The enlargements in 1995 and 2004 have turned the Baltic Sea almost into an inland sea of the EU.<sup>48</sup>

One of the most challenging specificities in the BSR is distance, and equally, physical remoteness. The distance between the northern and southern extremes of the Baltic Sea Rim equals the one between London and Istanbul. Distance as such does not necessarily pose economic, social or infrastructural problems. However, what is different about the BSR in comparison to other extended regions is the issue of remoteness and accessibility. In spatial planning, accessibility constitutes one of the decisive factors for the calculation of the socio-economic competitiveness of a region or sub-regional area and the relative disadvantage resulting from its specific geographical position.<sup>49</sup>

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45 HUNTINGTON Samuel P.: The Clash of Civilizations? In: Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993, pp. 22-34, here p. 31.

46 Ibid., here p. 25.

47 See VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international. En antologi om Stockholm i en regionaliserad och globaliserad värld*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 25. Anyway, Sweden and Finland do take part in the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme, and thus, are fully involved in the practical field activities as well as training and capability development.

48 See Baltic Study Net. Introduction to the Baltic Summer School Mare Europaeum, Berlin 23 July – 6 August 2006. Website of the Centre for Baltic Sea Region Studies (CEBAST) [www.balticstudies.org](http://www.balticstudies.org) [27 September 2007].

49 See for example SPIEKERMANN Klaus/AALBU Hallgeir: Nordic Peripherality in Europe. Nordregion Working Paper, Nr. 2/2004. Stockholm 2004.

What yet increases the load of distance and remoteness in structural terms is the additional factor of harsh climate in Northern Europe, which does not only affect the extreme North but also the urban areas in the Scandinavian south.

The political changes of 1989/90 not only gave rise to a wave of political transformation, they also opened the scene to new forms of security challenges. Soft security threats such as organised crime, illegal migration, drug trafficking and communicable diseases may be regarded as “direct consequences of the fall of the Baltic Wall”<sup>50</sup> or of the “accelerated social and political transformation” in the post-Soviet countries.<sup>51</sup> A set of other, more persistent and traditional problems is related to environmental hazards. They are partly aggravated by the fact that due to the low and variable salinity of the Baltic Sea, its marine life is exceptionally vulnerable. The lack of circulation creates lethal deposits of nutrients in the depths of the sea. Death and decay are increasingly spreading under the surface.

Nuclear safety is a particular cause for concern because of the serious and trans-boundary character of a possible accident. Together with other regional and local hazards, the environmental deterioration in the Murmansk area is a significant problem.<sup>52</sup>

Significantly, some of these challenges, such as pollution or health risks, have already existed before, but apparently, awareness about them only resurfaced now that the global security political perspective on the BSR was no longer solely determined by the Soviet threat. In fact, emphasis must be placed on the fact that not only the changing political circumstances resulted in a new set of security challenges; it was also the shifting level of ambition in international relations that eventually altered the parameters for risk assessment in the BSR.

Through the EU accession of the three Baltic States and of Poland, the security challenge resulting from the extreme economic and social disparities across the Baltic Sea rim has also become more visible. Haukkala emphasises that the Fenno-Russian border represents, next to the US-Mexican border, “one of the greatest drops in living standards in the world.”<sup>53</sup> The following table shows the socio-economic gap between the northern and the southern and eastern part of the BSR, giving details about each country’s Human Development Index (HDI) ranking, life expectancy, inflation rates and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.

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50 See SANDER Gordon: Off Centre. Baltic hands link across a troubled sea. In: Financial Times, 8 April 2000.

51 See MOROFF Holger: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): European Soft Security Policies. The Northern Dimension. Kauhava 2002, pp. 12-36, here p. 13.

52 HEROLF Gunilla: The Swedish Approach. Constructive Competition for a Common Goal. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 141-160, here 146.

53 HAUKKALA Hiski: Whose Governance? Challenging the Dominant Northern Dimension Discourse. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): Northern Veche. Proceedings of the Second Northern Research Forum, held in Veliky Novgorod, Russia. 19-22 September 2002, pp. 105-107, here p. 105.

	HDI ranking	life expectancy	inflation	GDP p.c. (US \$)
Sweden	5.	80.3	0.5	38,525
Finland	11.	78.7	0.9	35,562
Denmark	15.	77.3	1.8	44,673
Estonia	40.	71.6	4.1	8,331
Latvia	45.	71.8	6.7	5,868
Lithuania	41.	72.5	2.7	6,480
Poland	37.	74.3	2.2	6,346

**Table 2: Socio-Economic Disparities in the BSR<sup>54</sup>**

The general characteristics of the BSR are largely determined by its unique geo-political position. The specificities resulting from this position pose remarkable challenges to the policy makers in the region. The BSR features a variety of security problems that, through profound “transboundary effects”, have a far-ranging impact on the wider region of Northern Europe.<sup>55</sup> In fact, one of the most important BSR specificities is that overcoming the various problems resulting from its unique position needs to be seen as a trans-border challenge, a task that does not allow national or unilateral solutions. Over recent decades, this quest for cooperative cohesion and for harnessing of synergies has been extensively materialised in the form of Nordic Cooperation. Since the end of the Cold War had removed the superpower overlay, prospects for the establishment of cooperative structures across old dividing lines have grown progressively. The challenge of having to find joint solutions for common problems has considerably stimulated region-building actors to start up various different projects and initiatives serving these transregional purposes.

## *II. Remoteness and Marginality – The Periphery’s Romantic Temptation*

Physical remoteness can, as shown for the geographic context, result in certain structural disadvantages for the region or country concerned. When looking at the factor of remoteness from a political, and more generally, a social perspective the effect appears to be similar. Countries and regions situated at the margins of a continent or of a political community, such as the BSR in regard to the European Union are often associated with the idea of being marginal in the sense of politically unimportant or secondary.

In discourses of modernity and in the major theories of international politics, being on the margins is equated with a lack of influence, and even a lack of subjectivity in international affairs. A position in the margins is usually seen as something from which one should try to escape, by trying to instead get closer to the core.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Table generated on the basis of the Human Development Report 2006. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/> [24 January 2008].

<sup>55</sup> See MOROFF Holger: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): *European Soft Security Policies. The Northern Dimension*. Kauhava 2002, pp. 12-36, here p. 12.

<sup>56</sup> BROWNING Christopher S.: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): *Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements*. Aldershot 2005, p. 1-10, here p. 5.

Parker claims that marginality has to be dissociated from the notion of inferiority to, or dependence upon, a corresponding core. According to his vision, marginal players can have remarkable power in their own right and have considerable impact on the international scene. The basis for this ability is their very position at the margins that puts them into a state of permanent uncertainty. As their belonging to a certain entity always remains in doubt, they are pushed to assume a proactive attitude. However, also the 'centre' needs more commitment in order to keep the margins "on track". This is mostly because they have, in contrast to those who are part of the declared core, a large set of options at hand that could serve them as profitable alternatives to the 'core option'.<sup>57</sup> Even though Parker in his argumentation is not strictly talking about margins in the sense of territoriality, these reflections may well be applied to the question of the role a 'marginal' region such as the BSR can have in relation to its respective centre, i.e. the EU or 'Brussels'.<sup>58</sup>

This study is based on the assumption that geographical remoteness furthers the establishment of distinct identities, based on a strong awareness about the fact of being 'peripheral'. The psychological effects of potentially 'not being part of it' might, in the long run, also affect or determine the foreign policy conduct of states situated in peripheral regions. The unity of the system of Nordic Cooperation, for example, has always been promoted by the relative isolation and the insularity of the Northern European area, composed of peninsulas, islands and archipelagos. In fact, the Nordic sphere features only two mainland borders: a very short one between Germany and Denmark, and one in a rather desolate and uninhabited area between Finland and Russia.<sup>59</sup> However, the way Northern Europe and the 'far up North' are perceived is subject to changes. A look back into history shows that Northernness has not always been associated with mere remoteness and peripherality. The various notions attached to being positioned in the northern hemisphere of Europe were most commonly employed on the basis of a North-South division.

The North-South division of the world dominated European spatial imagination [...] from Antiquity up until the gradual emergence of a new East-West division during the early modern period. In ancient Greece and Rome, and for centuries thereafter, the North denoted a veritable cultural and economic backwater, a sphere inhabited by uncivilized barbarians. This image of extreme peripherality was challenged during the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the North acquired a more positive aspect and became the resource in the identity-building processes of realms and nations. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, it ceased to function as a master-signifier of Europeaness and again assumed a connotation of remoteness and peripherality.<sup>60</sup>

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57 See PARKER Noel: Integrated Europe and its 'Margins'. Action and Reaction. In: Id./ARMSTRONG Bill (eds): *Margins in European Integration*. Houndmills 2000, pp. 3-27, here p. 8-13.

58 For a more abstract analysis on these centre-periphery aspects, see chapter "Application PatternII: Sketching a Model of Explanation", p. 198-.

59 See JAANSON Kaido: The Baltic States and Norden. In: *The Baltic Review*, Vol. 19. Online Edition. Website of the Journal 'The Baltic Review' [www.tbr.ee](http://www.tbr.ee) [12 August 2007].

60 JOENNIEMI Pertti/LEHTI Marko: On the encounter between the Nordic and the northern. Torn Apart but Meeting Again? Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI): Working Paper, 11/2001, p. 5.

Generally, there is a certain tendency to disregard the political developments at the 'margins', i.e. the peripheral parts of Europe. This applies to both political practice and academic research. Most notably in the context of integration and the respective political discourse, Northern Europe often appears as a 'blank spot' on the virtual map of the European project. Joenniemi points at the additional problem that in most contexts Northern Europe, or the 'North', is treated as a "marker with a given content and unproblematic status."<sup>61</sup>

The marker remains embedded in perceptions of immobility and permanency. It is depicted, similarly to the other main markers on the compass, as being frozen, fixed and pre-set [...]. It is so firmly naturalised and sedimented that it is difficult to comprehend that in the end, the North too forms a discursive construct with changing borders.<sup>62</sup>

Apart from these various forms of academic disinterest and symptomatic political negligence coming from the 'southern' parts of Europe, peripheral regions such as the BSR are often subject to, as Olrich put it, "extreme views by those who are central." These "extreme views" again range between total disregard and political underestimation and the hyperbolic romanticisation of alleged attributes and value-laden categories such as the "Nordic spirit" or the "Arctic Mystery".<sup>63</sup>

Northern Europe has been something of a post-modern playground, where scholars well versed in critical understandings of international politics have played a hands-on role in how the region has developed.<sup>64</sup>

In fact, Northern Europe as other peripheral regions has been and still is often subject to the external (and often, arbitrary) application of either

- enthusiastic concepts that personate the North as something extraordinarily different in the sense of extreme or even preternatural,
- or charming and neat concepts, that classify the actors based in this part of Europe as largely inoffensive, tolerant and libertarian, and thus, most significantly, as harmless on the scene of global or European power politics.

Even though these concepts do not always comply with the genuine specificities and 'real' interests of Northern European actors, it is also very common to take these international clichés as reference models for official policy orientation. One important example in this context is the often close to romantic idealisation of the so-called 'Nordic Model' and the normative implications that it is said and thought to entail.<sup>65</sup>

Nordic self-esteem is boosted by the claims that '*Norden*' is 'the teacher of the rest of Europe', a 'future orientation of the European Union' or the 'EU's rich periphery'. It is claimed that '*Norden*' has something to teach Europe in the fields of minority rights, gender

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61 JOENNIEMI Pertti: North Goes Europe. Restoring Meaning or Playing with Emptiness? Copenhagen 2001, p. 1.

62 Ibid., p. 3.

63 See OLRICH Tómas Ingi: Implementation of a Northern Dimension. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): North meets North. Proceedings of the First Northern Research Forum, held in Akureyri and Bessastaðir, Iceland. 4-6 November 2002, pp. 119-121, here p. 119.

64 BROWNING Christopher S.: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements. Aldershot 2005, pp. 1-10, here p. 3.

65 For a discussion about the international perception of the Nordic Model, see ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Geopolitics of Nordic Identity from Composite States to Nation-States. Copenhagen 1997, p. 4.

equality, environmental policies, consumer policy, local administration and policy in dealing with the autonomic regions. The list of 'Nordic' merits is long, but the extent to which these are merely taken for granted conceptions, traditional myths and political slogans is hardly ever problematized.<sup>66</sup>

Also political actors *within* Northern Europe often ply with similar arguments, trying to profit from the sometimes gainful effect of either being reckoned as an ideal model of reference, or in other cases, as the "boring backwater" of Europe that takes pride in its "lethargic and uncontroversial political system" without ever lapsing into the infamous maelstrom of power politics."<sup>67</sup> Notions of "tiny and tidy Scandinavia"<sup>68</sup> or of the five Nordic states being "small, peace-loving, democratic countries"<sup>69</sup> allude to this specific Nordic attitude.<sup>70</sup> Some actors involved in the Baltic Sea region-building process also tried to avail themselves of colourful and idealised notion of what this region is basically about. The following example that claims to describe a "northern perspective on European history and culture" illustrates the lofty character of notions and images used in the context of these argumentative strategies.

Anthropologists and cultural historians consider all that Human do as culture. According to a brief definition, culture reflects the creativity of the human mind. [...] This limited every day concept of culture can support our common observations. In the Lappish heart, Rovaniemi does not compete with Florence or Rome. We would not catch up Central Europe's lead, even if we brought Luciano Pavarotti and la Scala's opera house to the Lappish mountains. Laplanders set a framework for high culture in the wonderful mountains, but it is representative of cultural understanding from the southern perspective. According to the wider concept, Lapland's nature floods into the culture, but one should learn to understand it as a rapids shooter reads the rapids. The Northern dimension opens unmeasurable wealth to the European audience and a complete new way to realize cultural capital status. [...] Snow and ice are used as elements of fine arts. Northern culture is a part of nature, in which the seasons are stages of fantasy and drama.<sup>71</sup>

### C. *What Makes a Region a 'Region'? Reflections on Baltic Sea 'Regionness'*

Generally, many analysts have tried to define the concept of 'region' in various contexts. In fact, there are many different territorial entities commonly – and sometimes mistakenly – classified under the same label – 'region'.

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66 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 367.

67 CAVE Andrew: Finding a Role in an Enlarged EU. In: Central Europe Review, Nr. 20. 22 May 2000. Online publication [www.ce-review.org](http://www.ce-review.org) [26 November 2007].

68 See KATZENSTEIN Peter J.: Regionalism in Comparative Perspective. ARENA Working Papers, No. 1/1996. Oslo 1996, p. 10.

69 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Nordic Countries in the Baltic Region. In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim. Stockholm 1997, pp. 26-53, here p. 28.

70 For more details about Nordicness and the politico-strategic instrumentalisation of Nordic uniqueness, see also chapter "Old North vs. New Regionalism – Visions Competing for the Same Space?", p. 76-.

71 Rovaniemi 2011. The Eight Seasons. *Gávccí jagiáiggi*. Promotional folder available online, official website of the city of Rovaniemi <http://www.rovaniemi2011.fi> [23 October 2007].

The range of so-called regions in Europe actually encompasses a variety of remarkably different phenomena. We call the BSR just as we do Bremen, Brussels and the Baranya.<sup>72</sup>

There is no transdisciplinary or global definition but generally a region can be conceived as a category that regroups disparate aggregates. However, as such it may still denominate very different concepts, e.g. intermediary formations between the local and the national level, sub-state entities within a country or nation, a cooperation zone that includes the respective state, a trans-border area, or indeed, an entire sub-continent.<sup>73</sup> What makes a region a region? This plain question leads us first to the aspect of territoriality and thus, to geography. When trying to define what it is exactly that makes us classify something as a region, the first and foremost condition seems to be locality. As Schmitt-Egner put it: “Location matters.”<sup>74</sup> However, Nekrasas pointed out that political geography should not try to lock regions up in a “steel cage” since geographical affiliations are subject to constant re-interpretation.<sup>75</sup> In fact, defining the BSR along sharp geographical borders by including all states and sub-state entities that directly border on the Baltic Sea seems problematic.

<b>Germany</b> Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein Mecklenburg-Vorpommern  <b>Poland</b> West Pomerania Pomerania Warmia-Masuria	<b>Sweden</b> Skåne Blekinge Östergötland Södermanland Gotland Stockholm Uppsala Gävleborg Västernorrland Västerbotten Norrbotten	<b>Finland</b> Lapland Northern-Ostrobothnia Central Ostrobothnia Ostrobothnia Satakunta Finland Proper Uusimaa Eastern Uusimaa Kymenlaakso	<b>Estonia</b>
			<b>Latvia</b>
			<b>Lithuania</b>
			<b>Russia</b> North-Western Federal District Kaliningrad

**Table 3: BSR States and Respective Sub-States**

However, Schäfer is right in saying that these ambits only serve the purpose of delineating administrative entities whose coverage does not necessarily correspond with the catchment area of the cooperative networks that Baltic Sea Regionalism has put forth.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, any sort of geographical definition has to remain vague in the sense that the BSR as a spatial concept does not have clear-cut borders.

72 SCHMITT-EGNER: The Concept of ‘Region’. Theoretical and methodological Notes on its Reconstruction. In: Journal of European Integration, No. 3/2002, pp. 179-200, here p. 179.

73 See SMOUTS Marie-Claude: The region as a new imagined community. In: LEQUESNE Christian/LE GALÈS Patrick: Regions in Europe. London/New York 1998, pp. 30-38, here p. 31.

74 SCHMITT-EGNER: The Concept of ‘Region’. Theoretical and methodological Notes on its Reconstruction. In: Journal of European Integration, No. 3/2002, pp. 179-200, here p. 180.

75 See NEKRASAS Evaldas: Is Lithuania a Northern or Central European Country? In: Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review, 1/1998, pp. 19-45, here p. 22.

76 See SCHÄFER Imke: Region-Building and Identity Formation in the Baltic Sea Region. In: The Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies, No. 1/2005, pp. 45-69, here p. 46.

The notion of 'Baltic Sea Region' cannot be simply equated with the geographic 'region' concept. In this study, the 'region' is perceived not to be solely determined by its factual characteristic features such as natural or geomorphic similarities. Geographic factors such as a common littoral form a region just as much as bare physical closeness does. The concept of a 'region' underlying this study is based on the assumption, that regions emerging from regionalist tendencies or proactive region-building efforts are based on additional ideational factors, with geographic circumstances forming some sort of conceptual auxiliary. To put it differently, geographical proximity is a fact, whereas 'regionness' is the outcome of a political process, the process of regionalism.

Defining 'regions' in the sense of spatial units is linked with the question of perceiving and conceptualizing borders. From a modernist point of view, a 'region' in the sense of a territorial entity is a clearly and neatly defined space with clear-cut borders and a designated centre that projects its power evenly across the whole terrain. From this point of view, borders do have the plain function of demarcating the inside from the outside without having any sort of constitutive subjectivity on their own. In contrast thereto, the concept of "fuzzy borders"<sup>77</sup> defines the margins as some sort of intermediary spaces of interaction and exchange whose cross-links reach right *beyond* the borders. According to this perspective, the mere fact that they do not only form the border but rather transcend and overlap borders and dividing lines already provides them with a substantive power of their own.<sup>78</sup> Instead of defining concepts of regions and borders, Hettne introduced a set of criteria that determine a region's 'regionness' assuming that the fact of a region being a region is not exclusive or absolute but that there are various degrees of 'regionness' that "make a region *more* or *less* of a region":

- geographical unit: a 'region' should form *some sort* of geographical unit, i.e. it should have *more* or *less* discernible boundaries defined by natural physical borders. A good example for this type of 'proto-region' is Sub-Saharan Africa;
- social system: the region is inhabited by human beings that at least maintain *some kind* of trans-local relationship (also hostile or negative); combined with a low level of organisation this level constitutes so-called "primitive regions";
- organised cooperation: the region implies organisational membership and respective structures ("formal region");
- civil society: organizational framework promotes social communication and convergence of values across the region; shared cultural tradition is a basic precondition for this sort of "regional anarchic society";
- acting subject: this stage is achieved with the coalescence of a distinct identity, actor capability, legitimacy and structure of decision-making; this regionalism is very similar to the process of state formation and nation-building. The ultimate outcome could be a "region state", which Hettne defines as a "supranational security community, where sovereignty is pooled for the best of all."<sup>79</sup>

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77 See CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/PETITO Fabio/TONRA Ben (eds): Fuzzy Politics around Fuzzy Borders. The European Union's 'Near Abroad'. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 4/December 2000, pp. 389-415.

78 See BROWNING Christopher S.: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements. Aldershot 2005, pp. 1-10, here p. 5-6.

79 See HETTNE Björn: Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia. Paper presented at the Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session', 2-6 September 2006, Hayama/Japan, pp. 3-4.



Even though Hettne claims that this scale of regionness is not intended as a stage theory, it nevertheless suggests some sort of evolutionary logic, according to which state-like regionness seems to constitute the most advanced stage a 'region' can reach. According to this line of argument, 'regionness' is closely linked with 'actorness'. In other words, the region is perceived as an independent variable, and the whole process of increasing regionness is a question of developing actor-like qualities such as decision-making and state-like self-identification. The BSR would probably range somewhere between Hettne's concept of a 'formal region' and a 'regional anarchic society' and thus, be fairly close to the ultimate stage of state-like regionness. However, the idea of a linearly progressing regionness seems neither applicable nor desirable for the Baltic Sea case at its current stage. This study's dealing with the BSR is based on the concept that equates 'region' to some kind of virtual 'action space' rather than conceiving it, in line with Hettne's 'region-state' image, as an aspiring 'action unit'.<sup>80</sup>

#### *D. Regionalism – Definitions, Delimitations and Typologies*

After the end of the Cold War, the study of regionalism has received new interest in both Political Science and Economics. Analysts have tried to identify different types of regionalism and to discover the inherent dynamics of regionalist developments, and have thus accumulated a rich store of expertise. The following subchapters are intended to give a brief overview of the terminological and conceptual basics, and eventually, to outline various approaches developed in order to describe and analyse this global phenomenon.

##### *I. The Regionalism Complex and the Importance of Conceptual Clarity*

Regionalism is a multidimensional and pluralistic phenomenon in international politics, and it is a complex and (maybe even more) contested subject area in IR studies. This is partly due to its multidisciplinary provenance: the academic concern with regional spatiality and regionness has not emerged from within conventional Political Science. Indeed, the respective research agenda has been shaped by various different disciplines, such as Geography, Sociology, Urban Studies, Anthropology, and Spatial Planning.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, theorists have developed many different ways of defining 'regionalism', each in view of their specific study and research purpose. As Herrschel and Gore put it, there is no global definition of 'region' or 'regionalism' as "regionalism means a lot of things to many people."<sup>82</sup> The popularity that regionalism gained in recent years has not only enhanced academic productivity; the variety of approaches has also produced a certain lack of conceptual clarity. An enormous variety of phenomena and developments is placed under the heading of 'regionalism': processes of social or economic regionalisation, growth of regional awareness or identity, formation of inter-state regional institutions, state-promoted economic integration, or emergence of

80 See SCHMITT-EGNER: The Concept of 'Region'. Theoretical and Methodological Notes on its Reconstruction. In: *Journal of European Integration*, No. 3/2002, pp. 179-200, here p. 181.

81 RUMFORD Chris: Rethinking European Spaces. Territory, Borders, Governance. In: *Comparative European Politics*, Issue 2/3 (July/September 2006), pp. 127-140, here p. 129.

82 HERRSCHEL Tassilo/GORE Benjamin: Creating the Multi-Purpose and Multi-Scalar 'Virtual Region'. *New Regionalisation in the Baltic Sea Area*. Paper presented at the 6th EURS Conference, Roskilde 21-23 September 2006, p. 1.

politically cohesive regional blocks, to name just a few examples. Given the extreme complexity and variety of the concept, Hurrell even suggests regarding “regionalism as an unstable and indeterminate process of multiple and competing logics with no overriding teleology or single end point. [...] It is very unlikely that any single theory will be able to explain the regionalism complex.”<sup>83</sup> Even though this statement might appear fairly scepticist, it could be considered helpful to the extent it emphasises the importance of terminological clarity.

Distinguishing between Regionalism’s multiple forms is a task too often ignored by observers, but it stands as a necessary precondition for all future empirical study. [...] Regionalism in its many guises is a moving target, especially when examined cross-nationally. [...] The dangers of conceptual imprecision include limits on comparability across countries, limits on the ability of regional specialists in multiple disciplines to communicate effectively, and limits on the ability to link theoretical work with necessary practical applications.<sup>84</sup>

The distinctions between the different forms of regionalism matter greatly, as many studies on regionalism seem indeed to be muddled because the respective analyst is insufficiently clear about the conceptual relationship between the various processes described under the banner of ‘regionalism’.<sup>85</sup>

## *II. Baltic Sea Region: What Sort of ‘Regionalism’?*

Regionalism as it is dealt with in this study needs to be clearly distinguished from the notion of ‘regionalism’ as an approach to state administration. In the context of national or low politics, ‘regionalism’ denominates the logic of dividing a political entity (usually a nation state) into a certain number of smaller political districts, and thereby of transferring power from the central government to these ‘regions’. The regarding political process is called ‘regionalisation’.<sup>86</sup> Another viable interpretation in this regard is ‘regionalism’ as a form of sub-national region-based tendency of disintegration, i.e. a domestic process – be it on peaceful terms or not – where a certain administrative sub-entity seeks greater voice or autonomy, if not outright independence or statehood. The basis of this sort of regionalism is usually a strong regional and ethno-territorial identity, e.g. Scotland, Catalonia, Corsica.<sup>87</sup>

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83 See HURRELL Andrew: The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): *Global Politics and Regionalism*. London 2005, pp. 38-53, here p. 41.

84 DOWNS William M.: Regionalism in the European Union. Key Concepts and Project Overview. In: *Journal of European Integration*, No. 3/2002, pp. 171-177, here p. 172.

85 See HURRELL Andrew: The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): *Global Politics and Regionalism*. London 2005, pp. 38-53, here p. 42.

86 See JOENNIEMI Pertti/WÆVER Ole (eds): *Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region*. Washington 1993, p. 4. A similar form of regionalism albeit under more constructive circumstances is the one underlying the concept of a ‘Europe of Regions’. For a critical discussion, see chapter “What kind of ‘Europe of the Regions’?”, p. 206-.

87 See SCHRIJVER Frans: *Regionalism after regionalisation: Regional identities, political space and political mobilisation in Galicia, Brittany and Wales*. Amsterdam 2004, p. 4.

In contrast to this concept, the notion of 'Baltic Sea Regionalism' refers to regionalist action in terms of 'region-building' *across* national borders as a phenomenon in *international* politics, i.e. a process of cohesion and networking that takes place in a certain region. Hence, 'Baltic Sea Regionalism' denominates all sorts of cooperative action set in the respective catchment area.<sup>88</sup> In the widest sense of the term, this type of regionalism could be defined as increasing cooperative activity gathering around a certain region or territorial entity. It is the process of a region 'growing together' on the ground of coordination, cooperation and mutual support in political, economical and ideological terms.

Apart from the Baltic Sea Region there are three other frontier regions in Europe that function as bridgeheads between East and West. In the North, there is the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, which promotes cooperation between the Northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland and the North Western part of Russia. In the centre of Europe there is the so-called new Euro-region that unites Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. And on the Northern shores of the Adriatic Sea a co-operative arrangement has been formed called the Alp-Adria Region.<sup>89</sup>

A certain degree of cohesiveness as well as a basic preference for region-based incorporation probably forms the most essential precondition for the emergence and consolidation of this sort of regionalist tendencies. Gunnarsson suggests another practicable and fairly comprehensive definition of 'regionalism':

Regionalism is the political idea of desirability in regionalisation of politics. Regionalisation refers to the empirical process that leads to the establishment of regions. This process can be generated from either within a region or through forces from outside of a geographical area, trying to establish a region.<sup>90</sup>

In this study, regionalism is conceived as a dynamic process that leads to the emergence of regional entities or 'regions', which eventually assume the shape of political, cultural or economic spaces founded on specific cohesive patterns. This process is determined by intersecting and competing interests and objectives effectuated by different types of players, e.g. governmental/official, non-governmental/non-official, corporate or particulate players. Hence, they are not to be found exclusively on the nation state level but *below* or rather *beyond* the scope of state-to-state action.

Before starting to elaborate on these different levels of regionalism, it is important to point at yet another usage of the term 'regionalism'. Confusingly, it also popped up in the *political* debate about the post Cold War developments in the BSR. The regional policy of single BSR states in view of the newly emerging post Cold War opportunities was sometimes also labelled as 'regionalism'. However, it was rather meant in the polemic sense of a negative or judgmental '-ism', a regionalist 'activism' or 'proactive regionalism' that was said to be driven largely by national interests and expedience. Bergman elaborated on this phenomenon of "adjacent internationalism".

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88 See FAWCETT Louise/HURRELL Andrew (eds): *Regionalism in World Politics. Regional organization and international order*. New York 1998, p. 11.

89 DELLENBRANT Jan Åke: *The Baltic Sea Co-operation. Visions and Realities*. In: BALDERSHEIM Harald/STÅHLBERG Krister (eds): *Nordic Region-Building in a European Perspective*. Aldershot 1999, pp. 83-97, here p. 85.

90 GUNNARSSON Malin: *Regionalism and Security. Two Concepts in the Wind of Change*. Umeå 2000.

As a result of the break-up of the USSR in 1991, the Nordic states were given a unique opportunity to engage more actively in their adjacent region. [...] The Nordics demonstrated extensive willingness to support the democratic, economic and social development of the three Baltics.<sup>91</sup>

In the case of nation-state regional policy, this phenomenon is also called “defensive” or “proactive regionalism”, a state behaviour that can be interpreted as either being a sign of genuinely constructive efforts or as a geo-strategic approach aiming at mere (soft) power accumulation.<sup>92</sup> In this very context, Sweden’s post Cold War regionalism directed towards the BSR was often said to have mainly served the purpose of enhancing its own geopolitical standing and of demonstrating its normative power by virtually transcending old dividing lines between East and West.<sup>93</sup> This type of judgmental ‘regional-ism’ has also been applied to describe the activist attitude of the various region-building players that used to avail themselves of overblown and grandiose rhetoric and value-laden symbolisms in order to mobilise partners for their own objectives and purposes.

### *III. Levels of Regionalism: Macro-, Meso- and Micro-Regionalism*

Regionalism as a phenomenon in international politics does not only involve different types of actors at different levels of political competence; regionalist dynamics also differ in terms of geographical reach and coverage. The process of regionalism occurs at different levels, i.e. covering a macro-, meso- or micro-sized area. Hence, an important distinction needs to be made between so-called Macro-, Meso- and Micro-Regionalism.<sup>94</sup>

		examples
Macro-Regionalism	Large geographical units (‘world regions’ or ‘international regions’), ranging between the ‘state’ and the ‘global’ level;	EU
Meso-Regionalism or Sub-Regionalism	medium size entities, also occurring between the ‘state’ and the ‘global’ level, but one level below Macro-Regionalism	BSR
Micro-Regionalism	small geographical units, ranging between the ‘national’ and the ‘local’ or ‘municipal’ level	Vlaanders region

**Table 4: Levels of Regionalism: Macro-, Meso- and Micro-Regionalism**

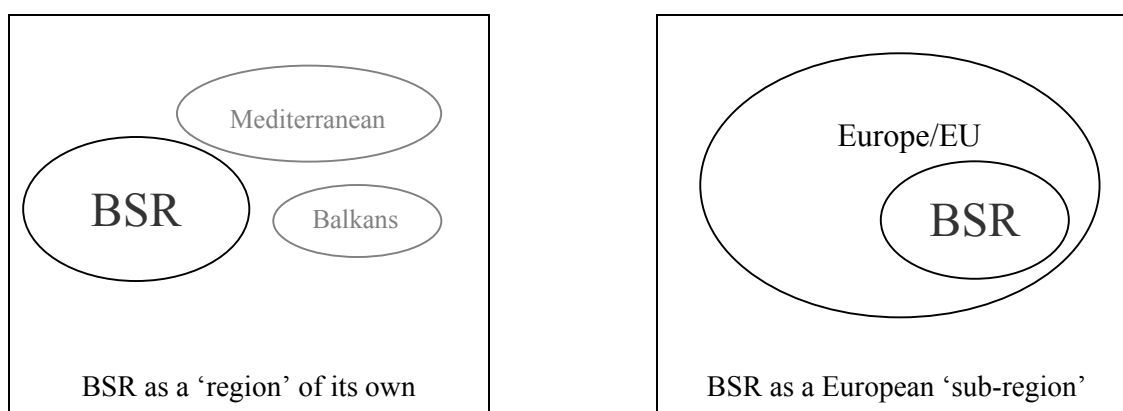
91 See BERGMAN Annika: Adjacent Internationalism. The Concept of Solidarity and Post-Cold War Nordic-Baltic Relations. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 1/2006, pp. 73-97, here p. 74. See also chapter “The BSR as an Auto-Dynamic Unit Within the Wider Unit Europe”, p. 203-.

92 For more comments on “defensive Regionalism”, see chapter “Old North vs. New Regionalism – Visions Competing for the Same Space?”, p. 76-.

93 Sweden’s regional policy in the early post Cold War phase will be addressed in chapter “What accounts for Swedish and Finnish Self-Perception?”, p. 113-.

94 See SÖDERBAUM Fredrik: Exploring the Links between Micro-Regionalism and Macro-Regionalism. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): Global Politics and Regionalism. London 2005, pp. 87-103, here p. 91.

This tripartite typology shows that the case of the BSR is covered by the concept of Sub-regionalism, or rather Meso-Regionalism.<sup>95</sup> The notion of ‘Meso-Regionalism’ appears more applicable to the purpose of this study as the idea of a *sub*-region suggests that there must always be a reference to the entity ranging above, i.e. the respective *macro*-region (in this case, the EU).<sup>96</sup> In academic analyses, the BSR is alternately defined as a ‘region’ or a ‘sub-region’; accordingly, BSR specific political dynamics are referred to as either ‘regionalism’ or ‘sub-regionalism’. The use of these terms mainly depends on whether the BSR is being viewed and analysed as an entity of its own (‘region’), or as a subordinate entity subjected to a wider spatial framework, e.g. the EU, or more generally, Europe (‘sub-region’).



**Figure 2: Models of Baltic Sea ‘Regionness’ – ‘Region’ and ‘Sub-Region’**

This study is built on the assumption that Baltic Sea Regionalism is to some extent but *not exclusively* embedded in the wider framework of European integration. Hence, the BSR is being analysed as both a European sub-region and a self-standing regional entity of its own. In order to clarify the terminology further, one also needs to differentiate between ‘regional’ and ‘sub-regional’ as terms either denominating

- a certain catchment area, i.e. as given in the above-stated typology, covering the horizontal dimension of geographical reach, position and territorial correlation with other entities (e.g. BSR vs. Europe) or<sup>97</sup>
- a certain level of action, i.e. as terms concerning the vertical dimension of actorness and institutional responsibility, accountability and power.

95 The concept of ‘meso-regions’ is also commonly used in Science of History. There, it is based on the “identification of clusters of transnational structures common to a constructed region that is not necessarily congruent with political or geographical boundaries. [...] This heuristic approach serves as a device for comparative analysis.” See TROEBST Stefan: What is a historical region? A Teutonic Perspective. In: European Review of History, No. 2/Summer 2003, pp. 173-188, here p. 173.

96 Söderbaum gives a useful definition of what a sub-region is about. “Their ‘sub’ prefix indicates that they only make sense and must be understood in relation to macro-regions (for example there can be no sub-regions without reference to a larger macro-region).” SÖDERBAUM Fredrik: Exploring the Links between Micro-Regionalism and Macro-Regionalism. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): Global Politics and Regionalism. London 2005, pp. 87-103, here p. 91.

97 See scheme above.

In this second sense, the notion of ‘sub-regional’ and ‘sub-regionalism’ refers to the subordinate (and most often sub-state) actors existing and operating at subordinate levels. Confusingly, Baltic Sea Regionalism is sometimes also referred to as ‘Micro-Regionalism’ based on the notion of a much broader European macro-scale process. The conventional form of macro-regionalism is purely sub-national and usually takes place within the parameters of a nation-state. This sort of regionalism on the ‘micro’ or local level is often related to political/administrative planning, democratic or economic/distributional motives; in most cases it is also shaped by the relationship between central government and micro-regional political or administrative forces. Hence, it reflects a model of vertical and state-oriented organisation. Meso-Regionalism has a distinct cross-border focus, i.e. it stretches out beyond both the state level and the state territory. Hence, Meso-Regionalism as it occurs in the case of the BSR could also be labelled as “cross-border regionalism” or “transnational regionalism”.<sup>98</sup> This type of regionalism is mostly based on a horizontal model of interaction and involves a wide range of different public and private actors that find themselves grouped together by way of networks or other cooperative formations.<sup>99</sup>

The territorial extent of regionalism, i.e. whether the respective catchment area is large or small, often informs about the level of action and the type of actors involved. In fact, it can be said that macro-regionalism mainly occurs at the inter-state or intergovernmental level, primarily involving state actors. Meso-Regionalism, on the other hand, may involve both state and non-state actors and includes intergovernmental interaction as well as non-governmental networking. Micro-Regionalism is naturally dominated by non-state actors and mainly occurs at a local level of action. However, needless to say, this pattern is not universally applicable.

#### *IV. Typologies*

Approaches that suggest certain typologies of regionalism that go beyond these simple distinctions considerably help to reduce the empirical complexity of various regionalist manifestations in international politics. They do serve as a tool for characterising the structure of different regionalist models, and for tracing certain regionalist developments over time. However, typologies remain practical tools with limited applicability and validity.

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98 The notion of “trans-nationality” needs to be clearly distinguished from the term and concept of “inter-nationality”. Whereas internationality includes intergovernmental dealings, i.e. between the government of one nation-state with the government of another nation-state, or of several nation-states, transnationality covers activity which transcends national boundaries and in which nation-state governments do not play the most important or even a significant role.

99 See JÖNSSON, Christer/TÄGIL Sven/TÖRNQVIST Gunnar: *Organizing European Space*. Lund/London 2000, p. 149. According to this definition, one can identify a respectable number of Meso-Regions in Europe, such as the North Atlantic Basin, the Northern Atlantic Region, the Metropolises of Northwestern Europe, the Alpine Region, the Carpathian Region, the Danube Basin, the Southern Atlantic, the Latin Region, the Adriatic Basin, the Balkan Region, the Western Mediterranean Basin, and the Central Mediterranean Basin. See KIVIKARI Urpo: *The Legacy of the Hansa. The Baltic Economic Region*. Helsinki 1996.

### *1. Old vs. New Regionalism and the New Regionalism Approach*

One of the most common typological distinctions of regionalism is the one differentiating between 'Old' and 'New Regionalism'. In the early 1990s, scholars began to use the phrase of 'New Regionalism' in many different contexts. It was mainly meant to stress the difference between current regionalist phenomena and 'Old Regionalism', meaning the respective body of theory and practice developed from the 1880s up until the late 1980s. Most studies on the characteristics of the 'New regionalist paradigm' have been conducted in the field of Economics and Economic Geography, focussing mainly on the link between trade-related processes and corresponding structures of governance.

New insights into the development of the space economy over the last two decades have meant that the scope and nature of economic geography have changed dramatically. [...] The field of New Regionalism is characterised, in particular, by an interest in the role of innovation and economic success ('competitiveness') at the level of particular international regions.<sup>100</sup>

The recent regionalist developments in East Asia and Latin America have been among the most popular examples used for empirical illustration in this context.<sup>101</sup> Most studies on the rise of 'New Regionalism' focussed on the international scale, i.e. on macro-regionalist manifestations such as ASEAN or Mercosur.<sup>102</sup> Hettne, one of the founding fathers of the New Regionalism Approach (NRA), introduced a more comprehensive model defining 'New Regionalism' as a multidimensional process of regional integration that includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects, and thus, goes far beyond the mere context of free trade and liberalisation.<sup>103</sup>

The following table brings together various findings of different exponents of this specific approach, and thus, reflects some sort of typological and terminological commonsense of the NRA.<sup>104</sup>

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100 LAGENDIJK Arnoud: Will New Regionalism survive? Tracing dominant concepts in economic geography. CURDS (Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies) Discussion Paper, No. 10. Newcastle 1998, p. 3.

101 See e.g. BULMER-THOMAS Victor (ed.): Regional Integration in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Political Economy of Open Regionalism. London 2001. And STORPER Michael: The Resurgence of regional economies, ten years later. The region as a nexus of untraded interdependencies. In: European Urban and Regional Studies 2/2005, pp. 191-221. And LAGENDIJK Arnoud: Will New Regionalism survive? Tracing dominant concepts in economic geography. CURDS (Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies) Discussion Paper, No. 10. Newcastle 1998.

102 See SCHMITTER Philippe C./MALAMUD Andrés: Theorizing Regional Integration and Inter-Regional Relations. Workshop Proposal. Florence/Lisbon 2006, p. 1. Website of the European University Institute, Florence [www.iue.it](http://www.iue.it) [22 November 2007].

103 Hettne also focussed more on the subject of city-regions and other locality-based 'bottom-up' region building processes. See HETTNE Björn: Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia. Paper presented at the Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session', 2-6 September 2006, Hayama/Japan, p. 3.

104 See ibd. and VÄYRYNEN Raimo: Regionalism. Old and New. In: International Studies Review, Issue 1/2003, pp. 25-52. And FABBRI Claudia M.: The Constructivist Promise and Regional Integration. An Answer to 'old' and 'new' puzzles. CSGR (Centre for the Study of Globalisation) Working Paper, Nr. 182/05. Warwick 2005. And HERRSCHEL Tassilo/GORE Benjamin: Creating the Multi-Purpose and Multi-Scalar 'Virtual Region'. New Regionalisation in the Baltic Sea Area. Paper presented at the 6th EURS Conference, Roskilde 21-23 September 2006.

<b>OLD REGIONALISM</b>	<b>NEW REGIONALISM</b>
<b>top-down</b>	<b>bottom-up</b>
launched from above, on the basis of formal state-level initiatives	emerging from within the region, less formal and more spontaneous
<b>structure</b>	<b>process</b>
main focus on structural planning formal proceduralism	main focus on strategic planning deregulated progression
<b>government</b>	<b>governance</b>
state-oriented restriction to public sector	open to all types of actors non-public actors involved
<b>exclusiveness</b>	<b>openness</b>
introverted and particularistic exclusive and (partly) protectionist formal importance of membership criteria	extroverted and multilateral inclusive flexible membership
<b>objective-centered</b>	<b>comprehensive</b>
e.g. security or economy-oriented	variety of fields, including 'low policy'
<b>concentration of power</b>	<b>decentralisation</b>
vertical state-type hierarchy	horizontal/decentralised diffusion of power
<b>responsibility</b>	<b>trust</b>
no one-sided accumulation of power clear separation of labour	confidence-building activities creation of visions and common identity
<b>coordination</b>	<b>cooperation</b>
distribution of resources	voluntary pooling
<b>continuity</b>	<b>change</b>
constant development/stability	rapid changes/volatile conditions

**Table 5: Old and New Regionalism in Comparison**

Hettne claims that new regionalism has to be seen in connection with globalisation and the resulting demise of the Westphalian state model, which is a process that has not only qualified the very notion of national sovereignty but has also blurred the lines between national, regional and global contexts. Recent regionalist activity is thought to represent a defence or reaction to globalisation, and an attempt by governments to claw back collectively some autonomy over decision-making and to manage both the positive and negative aspects of international independence (reactive/defensive' regionalism).

Globalism implies the growth of a world market, increasingly penetrating and dominating the 'national' economies [...]. From this, there may emerge a political will to halt or to reverse the process of globalization, in order to safeguard some degree of territorial control and cultural diversity.<sup>105</sup>

105 HETTNE Björn: Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia. Paper presented at the Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session', 2-6 September 2006, Hayama/Japan, pp.1-2.



In Economics and Urban Studies on regionalism, this alleged correlation between globalisation and progressive regional and local mobilisation has also been termed the “Glocalisation-Thesis” [sic!], which claims that globalisation is directly linked to an increase in the significance of the regional and the local, of regions and cities.<sup>106</sup> While these again economy-based reflections might play a certain role in the case of Baltic Sea Regionalism, the line of argument shows that also the more comprehensive interpretation of ‘New Regionalism’ is not neatly applicable to the BSR. Hettne’s NRA has been subject to harsh criticism, mainly as being too vague and arbitrary for the explanation of regionalist dynamics. Lovering is one of the most vibrant critics:

It is a set of claims thrown together with inadequate attention to either factual evidence or theoretical coherence, which both misrepresent the real experiences of regions and illegitimately debates over strategy. As a rather vague framework within which to speculate on some possible relationships between hypothetical actors at a vaguely specified level of abstraction it has some limited utility.<sup>107</sup>

However, most of the features that the NRA suggested for the ‘New’ type of regionalism have been used repeatedly in the scholar debate about Baltic Sea Regionalism. This is particularly true for Hettne’s assumption that the ‘bottom-up’ character of New Regionalism is conditionally related to the progressive deconstruction of the modern or Westphalian state concept. In fact, analysts have outdone themselves trying to typify and characterise the phenomenon of Baltic Sea Regionalism, establishing ‘post-sovereignty’, ‘post-modernism’, ‘post-Westphalianism’, ‘post-security political’ or ‘neo-medieval’ as the most common labels attributed to the BSR in this context. These attributions may briefly be summarized as follows:

- post-sovereign: The inherent structural approach to regional cohesion that the BSR setting implies transcends the idea of national and territorial sovereignty: it propagates complexity and the establishment of a network character that blurs vertical hierarchies and allows trans-boundary economic flows, transnational exchange and the establishment of border-breaking cultural identities.<sup>108</sup>
- post-modern/Westphalian: These attributions are very closely related to the idea of post-sovereignty as the structural orientation of modern states, or rather *the* ‘Westphalian state’, is strongly linked to sovereignty and state independence.

“The wide array of projects of regional cooperation that have developed in Northern Europe since the end of the Cold War have fundamentally re-conceptualised the nature of borders in the region (including EU borders), and as such significantly problematise any Westphalian aspirations that may exist at the EU centre.”<sup>109</sup>

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106 The “Glocalisation” neologism originally stems from Japanese business practices in the 1980s, which Robertson later developed in theory. See ROBERTSON Roland: Globalisation or Glocalisation? In: Journal of International Communication, Issue 1:1994, pp. 33-52.

107 LOVERING John: Theory led by Policy? The Inadequacies of the “New Regionalism” in economic geography illustrated from the Case of Wales. Paper presented at the Economic Geography Research Group Seminar ‘Institutions and Governance’. London July 1998, p. 21.

108 MAKARYCHEV Andrey S.: Where the North Meets the East. Europe’s ‘Dimensionalism’ and Poland’s ‘Marginality Strategy’. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 3/2004, pp. 299-315, here p. 301.

109 BROWNING Christopher S.: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements. Aldershot 2005, pp. 1-10, here p. 6.

- post-security political: since the policy solutions developed in the context of Baltic Sea Regionalism mainly address issues of soft security, this type of regionalism is perceived to pursue an alternative or new concept of security and threat perception.
- neo-medieval: argument based on the multitude of overlapping spaces of authority and transnational identities that regionalism shares with the Middle Ages.<sup>110</sup>

Hettne perceived the end of the Cold War as the central and decisive historical marker for the transition from the ‘Old’ to the ‘New’ regionalist paradigm of the 1990s.

Whereas the old regionalism was formed in a bipolar Cold War context, the new is taking shape in a multi-polar world order. The new regionalism and multipolarity are, in fact, two sides of the same coin. The decline of US hegemony and the breakdown of the Communist subsystem created a room-for-manoeuvre, in which the new regionalism could develop. It would never have been compatible with the Cold War system, since the ‘quasi-regions’ of that system tended to reproduce bipolarity within themselves.<sup>111</sup>

According to the primary logic of this argument, the post Cold War setting should have had similar consequences for the BSR. In fact, the political changes of 1989/90 paved the way for regionalist activities across old dividing lines, and for the first time, opened the scene for new kinds of ‘bottom-up’ regionalism. However, Williams exemplified a new way of applying the old-new dichotomy laid down in the NRA, essentially breaking with this argumentation.

In my study, ‘New Regionalism’ is understood *not* as a theory for *explaining* [emphasis added] the genesis of regions but as a tool for *describing* certain structural constituencies of regional settings. This allows a precise differentiation between types of regional development, where ‘New Regionalism’ is primarily being seen as a ‘bottom-up’ development that questions hierarchies and supports multilateralism. ‘Old Regionalism’ stands for classical intergovernmental relations where states and sovereignty play a crucial role.<sup>112</sup>

Instead of ascribing the “New regionalist paradigm” to all forms of post Cold War regionalism in the BSR she used the typology of ‘Old’ and ‘New’ in order to characterise and compare various *coexisting* regionalist formations. Williams’ reading of the NRA shows that the end of the Cold War *did* indeed open new opportunities for regional cooperation and thus, allowed the emergence of what is commonly defined as ‘open’ or ‘New Regionalism’. However, it also shows that nevertheless, not all cooperative formations that surfaced in that period fit into this new conceptual paradigm. In the public perception, e.g. the CBSS was seen as one of the most prominent examples for the so called ‘new’ regionalist activism that popped up in the BSR after 1989, even though structurally, it adhered more to the ‘old style’ regionalism.<sup>113</sup>

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110 See *ibid.*, here p. 3.

111 HETTNE Björn: Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia. Paper presented at the Global Seminar ‘96 Shonan Session’, 2-6 September 2006, Hayama/Japan.

112 WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. In: NORDEUROPA Forum 1/2005, pp. 3-20, here p. 7.

113 For a detailed discussion, see chapter “The Irony of Competition I”, p. 47-.

Herrschel and Gore developed yet another alternative or comprehensive interpretation for the NRA and its underlying concepts and terminology, building on the general assumption that ‘Old’ and ‘New’ regionalist manifestations should not be seen as two separate concepts but rather as “two sides of the same coin.”<sup>114</sup>

Generally referred to as ‘old’ and ‘new’ respectively, different features are associated with the two categories, depending on the respective condition at the beginning of the presumed changes. But [...] rather than following a simple sequential shift from ‘old’ to ‘new’, whereby the latter, as repeatedly suggested, replaces the former, there seems to be need for concurrency of the two. They are two sides of the same coin. This means that whatever features of ‘old’ Regionalism there are first, they will be complemented by the relevant ‘new’ features of the respective new form of the region.<sup>115</sup>

According to Herrschel and Gore, this specific combination of *old* and *new* qualities forms the basis for an “integrated” or “comprehensive regionalism.” That is to say that in practice, ‘New Regionalism’ should not be perceived to have *replaced* the “old pattern” but rather to have *added* to the existing regionalist fashion.

Evidence ‘on the ground’ suggests less of a shift than a need for complementarity between ‘old’ and ‘new’ practices. In this, existing ways of ‘doing regions’ are expanded, rather than replaced by new ways. How this is done reflects local conditions, including the personalities of the main decision makers.<sup>116</sup>

Applied to the BSR this means that it is only the diversity of approaches materialised after the end of the Cold War that made it a model case for the ‘full set’ of regionalisms. Drawing on a broad range of regional scales and thus their associated interests and understandings of regional cohesion, it offers a particularly diverse example of the multi-faceted nature of regionalism in its full and “integrated extent” by bringing together the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ logic of regionalism.<sup>117</sup>

## 2. *Hard vs. Soft Regionalism*

The dichotomy of ‘Hard’ and ‘Soft’ in the context of regional development originally stems from the field of Urban Geography and is thus far less common in Political Science.<sup>118</sup> Makarychev tried to apply this terminology to the conceptual background of regionalisation in Northeastern Europe and produced a typology of regionalism that is much akin to the old-new paradigm presented earlier in the chapter.

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114 See HERRSCHEL Tassilo/GORE Benjamin: Creating the Multi-Purpose and Multi-Scalar ‘Virtual Region’. New Regionalisation in the Baltic Sea Area. Paper presented at the 6th EURS Conference, Roskilde 21-23 September 2006, p. 2.

115 See *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

116 See, *ibid.*, pp. 4.

117 See *ibid.*, p. 17.

118 See e.g. MATTHIESEN Ulf/BÜRKNER Hans-Joachim: Grenzmilieus im potentiellen Verflechtungsraum von Polen mit Deutschland. Erkner 2002.

<b>HARD REGIONALISM</b>	<b>SOFT REGIONALISM</b>
<b>actorness – scale of interaction</b>	
state-to-state	diversified
<b>flow of activities/distribution of power and responsibility</b>	
vertical	horizontal
<b>focus</b>	
control	influence
<b>promoting</b>	
hierarchy and standardisation	autonomy and variety
<b>structural logic</b>	
administrative and/or diplomatic	integrated network concept
<b>main organizing principle</b>	
sovereignty and security	de-regulated regionality
<b>relations</b>	
formal and framework-oriented	flexible and network-oriented
<b>vision of regionality</b>	
sovereign (modern)	post-sovereign (post-modern)

**Table 6: Hard and Soft Regionalism in Comparison**

Just as the old-new dichotomy introduced by Hettne, these two opponent concepts of regionalism suggest a formalistic and state-centered structure on the one side, and a more flexible and informal design on the other. According to Makarychev's typology, 'Soft Regionalism' is based on a decentralized network-centric logic of organisation.

Its accent on networked Regionalism [...] leaves ample space for grass-roots initiatives beyond the 'administrative market'. Creativity, inspiration and imagination become guiding principles of 'soft' Regionalism. It draws on a set of shared meanings giving rise to a sense of belonging. [...] 'Hard Regionalism' refers to top-down, state-centric, hard security-oriented cooperation. It is centralised and elicits a hierarchical pattern of regional dynamics focused on control over sovereignty, territory and borders.<sup>119</sup>

Even though the 'hard'-'soft' dichotomy has never been linked to a sequencing logic, still it presents 'Soft Regionalism' as the more progressive or advanced version of the two. Drawing on the argument suggested by Herrschel and Gore in the context of the 'old'-'new' dichotomy, it should be emphasised that these typologies cannot be perceived as exclusive categories but rather as concurrent concepts.<sup>120</sup>

119 MAKARYCHEV Andrey S.: Where the North Meets the East. Europe's 'Dimensionalism' and Poland's 'Marginality Strategy'. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 3/2004, p 301.

120 See HERRSCHEL Tassilo/GORE Benjamin: Creating the Multi-Purpose and Multi-Scalar 'Virtual Region'. New Regionalisation in the Baltic Sea Area. Paper presented at the 6th EURS Conference, Roskilde 21-23 September 2006, p. 2.

### *E. Regionalism in Northern Europe After 1989*

The political changes of 1989/90 opened a “historical window of opportunity” for the establishment of cooperative cross-border networks in Northern Europe.<sup>121</sup> The newly gained independence of the three Baltic States made it possible for regional and sub-regional actors to try to bridge the gaps and dividing lines caused by the static bipolar structure of the Cold War. For the BSR the collapse of the Iron Curtain stood for the fall of – what Sander called – a ‘Baltic Wall.’<sup>122</sup> The specific circumstances that followed the end of the Cold War in the BSR paved the way for regional cooperation across the Baltic Sea Rim – a phenomenon that has put forth a large number of associations, projects and initiatives operating at different levels of action and covering a large range of policy fields. Promoted by the decentralisation of the international system and the removal of the superpower overlay, both the number of regional organisations and interest in what was called the ‘New Regionalism’ grew exponentially.<sup>123</sup>

### *I. The Early Phase of Construction*

Today’s BSR is said to be the most networked, and therefore, among the most complex regions in Europe. Given the huge variety of cooperative structures and initiatives at hand, it would go beyond the scope of this study to explain the history of establishment in detail, or to mention every single initiative in a specific content-related context. At this point, it seems more practicable and helpful to offer a structured overview on the bulk of cooperative formations and to outline the fundamental events in the early phase of Baltic Sea Regionalism, focussing in particular on the major discursive trends at the first stage of region-building and construction.<sup>124</sup>

Most of the cooperative structures in the BSR were founded (or, as in the case of HELCOM, structurally reconceptualized) in the wake of the 1989/90 events. Stålvant called this early phase of pro-active cohesiveness the ‘construction period’ (Germ. *Grundlegungsperiode*) of Baltic Sea Regionalism, in which the first generation of regionalist structures emerged.

It was the phase of seminars and of debates about ideas and visions. The variety of Baltic Sea identities was made aware, and new organising principles for cross-border action and cooperation were formulated. The first regionalist actors entered the scene: networks and action groups (such as Coalition Green Baltic) as well as official interregional initiatives were launched at the national, regional and local level.<sup>125</sup>

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121 See WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. The Genesis of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a historical case study. In: NORDEUROPA Forum 1/2005, pp. 3-20, here p. 5.

122 See SANDER Gordon: Off Centre. Baltic hands link across a troubled sea. In: Financial Times, 8 April 2000.

123 See FAWCETT Louise: Regionalism from a Historical Perspective. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): Global Politics and Regionalism. London 2005, pp. 21-37, here pp. 29-30.

124 For a detailed description of the major associations and initiatives, see the annex of this study.

125 STÅLVANT Carl-Einar: *Zehn Jahre Ostseekooperation. Was wurde erreicht – was bleibt zu tun?* In: Schleswig-Holsteinisches Institut für Friedenswissenschaften (ed.): SCHIFF Texte, No. 61. Kiel 2000, p. 12.

There is no consensus in academia about who the real founding fathers were, and where exactly to allocate the starting point of Baltic Sea Regionalism. Williams identified ideas about the creation of a New Baltic Sea Region as early as in 1988, when Björn Engholm, then social-democratic Prime Minister of the German *Bundesland* Schleswig-Holstein, launched the vision of building up a cooperative network across the Baltic by reviving the spirit of the old historic Hanseatic League (“New Hansa”) in the form of a “Baltic Forum”.<sup>126</sup> However, the development of Baltic Sea Regionalism in this early period was nothing of a clear process of progressive and controlled regionalisation. There were many parallel and partly diverging region-building projects that characterised the phase between 1989 and 1995.

## II. *The Irony of Competition I*

The emergence of Baltic Sea Regionalism in the early 1990s has been accompanied by a fervent and enthusiastic rhetoric about the positive dynamics of new Baltic ‘togetherness’ that were to transcend historic dividing lines. The emerging regionalist dynamics that shaped the post Cold War phase in Northern Europe have often been referred to as a “wave of cooperative spirit” or a “rush of togetherness.”<sup>127</sup> What has hardly entered the public and academic debate is that this enthusiasm, which in a certain sense unified the wide range of initiatives and region-building projects, actually built on very different grounds. The specific circumstances that can be identified in the BSR case call for a more differentiated perspective. The various newly established associations and projects did not only strive for innovation and proactive originality but also had specific strategic objectives. In some cases, these newly appearing regional entities resulted in the creation of a series of different and potentially competing visions of spatial prototypes, each building on specific normative foundations and different ideological and societal perceptions. The most prominent example in this regard is closely related to the above-mentioned “Baltic Forum” initiative by Björn Engholm, then social-democratic Prime Minister of the German *Bundesland* Schleswig-Holstein, and the establishment of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Engholm had envisaged the creation of some sort of coordinating platform to embrace all cooperative activities in the BSR. At first his initiative found fertile soil, most importantly among Swedish and Northern-German scholars.

This group of actors was determined to create a post-modern paradigm, in which the nation-state was gradually to lose importance and new forms of interaction, based on networking and people-to-people contact, should take over. It was seen as a region-building experiment, where the actors obviously had their own interests but were joining forces in order to reach a synergetic effect.<sup>128</sup>

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126 See WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. The Genesis of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a historical case study. In: NORDEUROPA Forum 1/2005, pp. 3-20, here p. 4-5.

127 See e.g. ANTOLA Esko/KIVIKARI Urpo: The Baltic Sea Region. A Dynamic Third of Europe. Turku 2004.

128 WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. The Genesis of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a historical case study. In: NORDEUROPA Forum 1/2005, pp. 3-20, here p. 5.

However, Engholm's "model of open participation" had only little in common with a state-level construct. He rather aimed at the establishment of a multi-centric network, a de-centralised forum for various societal groups.

The *Baltic Forum* was to be pragmatic and consensus-oriented. Practical questions should have priority over the fundamental and institutional concerns of international politics. Co-operation should be flexible, open and not prone to rigid hierarchical structures, the main goal being societal dialogue, not political integration. Therefore, the institution should represent a forum for different societal groups instead of governments.<sup>129</sup>

Engholm's "New Hansa" initiative was thwarted by a parallel, more traditionally oriented intergovernmental construction. Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, then liberal foreign ministers of Germany and Denmark, initiated and encouraged the establishment of the CBSS as a state-level umbrella association that was to facilitate and promote cooperation and coordination among the Baltic Sea littoral states including Norway.<sup>130</sup> Beforehand, Genscher had been reported to have complained about Engholm's proposal, as he perceived it to infringe the federal state prerogatives in foreign policy.<sup>131</sup>

According to Williams' interpretation, the final construction of the CBSS eventually met many criteria of the 'old style' regionalism even though it was actually part of the alleged 'new' regionalist wave in the BSR, following the decline of the Soviet empire. While Engholm's vision of a 'Baltic Forum' was more of a model for "open participation" that was to involve all different types of official and non-official actors (civil society, NGOs, sub-regional entities) and thus, very much complied with the typology of 'New Regionalism', the structural concept of the CBSS was more formalistic and state-centric. It was designed according to strictly intergovernmental logics, with e.g. its main decision-making body, the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), being recruited from the member-state Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Williams identified yet another aspect that brought the CBSS concept closer to the 'old' idea of regionalism.

The main difference to the initial ideas proposed by Slesvig-Holstein [note: the Baltic Forum] was not only that the activities had been shifted to the intergovernmental level, but that they had been shifted to give a stronger focus on 'development aid' for the Baltic States, and thus formulated in the wording of classical foreign policy.<sup>132</sup>

Engholm failed to keep his image of being the founding father of Baltic Sea Regionalism as his 'new style' project was eventually displaced by the formalistic and 'old style' counterpart – the CBSS. Williams mentions one last attempt to "counteract the intergovernmentalism of the CBSS." This time it was not a political initiative but an idea emerging from an academic background. Joenniemi and Wæver, two Nordic researchers, proposed the creation of a "Confederation of Baltic Sea Regions" with

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129 Ibid., here p. 14.

130 Iceland joined the CBSS in 1995.

131 See STÅLVANT Carl-Einar: The Council of the Baltic Sea States. In: COTTEY Andrew (ed.): Subregional Cooperation in the New Europe. Building Security, Prosperity from the Barents to the Black Sea. London/New York 1998, pp. 46-68, here p. 56.

132 WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. The Genesis of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a historical case study. In: NORDEUROPA Forum 1/2005, pp. 3-20, here p. 17.

loose structures, voluntary membership and a flexible agenda. Anyway, just as the Baltic Forum, this version of a ‘new style’ regionalist formation never took shape. At the time it was presented to the public, in summer 1992, the CBSS had already been established as the model case of Baltic Sea regionalist cooperation. Looking at these inner-German events, two ‘German’ factors can be identified that dominated the “construction phase” of Baltic Sea Regionalism.<sup>133</sup>

- German party-politics; most importantly, disputes between social democrats and liberals;
- internal struggles between the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein and the German Foreign Ministry.

This study does not intend to focus on the specific role and importance of domestic discourse within the single states involved in the process of post-1989 regionalism. However, these observations help to characterise the general course of events in the BSR. This example gives important information about how Baltic Sea Regionalism evolved in its early stages, to what extent individual players shaped the development of cooperative links in the region. Interestingly, the emergence of the new inclusive ‘Baltic Sea Region’ occurred in a highly competitive political atmosphere. There is a certain degree of irony in the fact that instead of pooling the efforts in order to achieve common or at least very similar goals, some region-builders decided to mingle their regionalist ambitions with trite every day politics. However, this sort of competition between different region-building projects might have contributed to the number and variety of cooperative formations present in the region of today. While in the case of Engholm’s Baltic Forum, an innovative regionalist vision has actually been outperformed by its intergovernmental counterpart, in other cases, these dynamics might have inspired the creation of a parallel and competing region-building project. Today, the BSR allows both functional overlap and constructive competition.

### *III. The Council of the Baltic Sea States*

The CBSS was founded in 1992 under the overall objective to create a regional forum for dialogue and coordination between the national governments of the Baltic Sea States. The establishment of the CBSS was based on a Danish-German initiative launched Genscher and Ellemann-Jensen, then liberal foreign ministers of Germany and Denmark.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> See *ibid.*, here p. 5 and 18.

<sup>134</sup> Catellani points out that the role of the Danish foreign minister was less proactive than it might have appeared. The fact that the CBSS was launched right after a bilateral meeting held in Copenhagen did support the impression that Denmark had been the driving force behind the initiative. “Uffe Ellemann Jensen [...] contributed substantially both to the creation of the CBSS and to the development of a more assertive stand by Denmark within the framework of the European integration process. However, the importance of his activism should not be overestimated, especially in the light of the role Germany played in connection with the launch of the initiative.” Genscher in turn was bound by the consideration that a German initiative in the BSR involving Russia as a partner would have appeared inappropriate for the geopolitical allocation of Germany in the New Europe. See CATELLANI Nicola: *The EU’s Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations?* Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 5.



Its very nature and structural constitution turns the CBSS into much more than ‘just another regional organisation’ as it unites the major regional actors on the governmental level, comprising all states bordering the Baltic Sea, including Russia as well as Norway, and the European Commission.<sup>135</sup> Hence, the CBSS was the first organisation to bring the Commission, Russia, Germany, the Baltic republics and the Nordic countries together at one table. Given its direct institutional link to the European Union and the unique constellation of members, right from the beginning, the CBSS constituted a sort of umbrella organisation for all forms of cooperation in the BSR.<sup>136</sup> In fact, the CBSS was officially intended to serve as a point of reference for all forms of Baltic regional cooperation. One of the constitutive factors of this special status of the CBSS results from its close links to the European integration process. The CBSS has considerably backed the EU enlargement process. After the accession of Sweden and Finland, the CBSS agenda has been gradually syntonised with the relevant EU policies. A similar effect could be observed following the 2004 enlargement round. Due to its close institutional ties with the European Commission, the CBSS also actively contributed to the development of the EU ND. After the launch of the policy in 1997, the CBSS was formally involved in the implementation process.

The CBSS benefits from the fact that it has focussed on security issues from the beginning. It has a top-down logic much in line with that of the European Union, a central player in setting the dominant thinking of today’s security co-operation in Europe. [...] The CBSS has a role to play as the catalyst of a security community much like *Norden*.<sup>137</sup>

Another decisive factor was the strategic potential that the formal involvement of Russia bore for the bilateral relations of the EU. Working closely together with the CBSS not least opened additional channels for communication and provided a multilateral forum for consultation and debate with this important strategic partner.<sup>138</sup> Since 2001, the CBSS has also intensified the efforts of coordinating its activities with those of other regional organisations in the Baltic Sea area by way of annual coordination meetings. This should generally provide a more structured channel for the involvement of other stakeholders. The Council also has appointed a number of strategic partners that on these occasions get the opportunity to voice their concerns and coordinate their efforts with the CBSS and other organisations. In this regard, the CBSS has established particularly close links to the BSSSC, the UBC, VASAB 2010, and HELCOM.<sup>139</sup> Today, the CBSS seeks to act as a hub between the European Commission and other regional organisations. In 2001, the CBSS has taken the initiative to hold annual

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135 See PETERSEN Nikolaj: Denmark and the European Union 1985-96. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 2/1996, pp. 185-210, here p. 189.

136 See CATELLANI Nicola: The EU’s Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations? Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 4.

137 BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Co-operation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 29.

138 See HUBEL Helmut/GÄNZLE Stefan: The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a Sub-Regional Organisation for ‘soft security risk management’ in the North-East of Europe. Report to the Presidency of the CBSS, 18 May 2001, p. 19.

139 Other strategic partners are the Baltic Development Forum (BDF), the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA), the Baltic Sea Forum ‘Pro Baltica’, the Baltic Sea NGO Forum (BSNF), and the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN). For details see official CBSS website [www.cbss.st](http://www.cbss.st) [26 November 2007].

coordination meetings with the heads of a group of subregional organisations. Six such meetings have been held to date: 2001 in Riga/Latvia, 2002 in Lillehammer/Norway, 2003 in Klaipeda/Lithuania, 2004 and 2005 in Malmö/Sweden, and 2007 in Bornholm/Denmark. In addition to providing a more structured channel for CBSS Special Participants, these meetings were also thought to allow the partner organisations to voice their concerns and coordinate their efforts with the CBSS and other regional actors. Two specific agenda issues have dominated the meetings so far: coordination of input to the elaboration and implementation of the EU Northern Dimension Action Plan (ND AP), and improved coordination of activities and information flows among the participating organisations. The CBSS tries to fulfil the function of communicating the collected positions to the European Commission. The CBSS has also launched an internet portal for the BSR in order to provide a single entry point and information source on the wide range of Baltic Sea regional cooperation activities.<sup>140</sup>

#### IV. *Visions and Constructed Realities – The History Tool*

The post Cold War discourse on the emergence of a ‘new’, ‘comprehensive’ and ‘inclusive’ BSR was dominated by visionary and elocutionary images. Generally, many of the regional and sub-regional initiatives that emerged in the BSR after the end of the Cold War were based upon rather enthusiastic ambitions, stressing the normative power of the cooperative spirit of the past. Many promoted Baltic Sea Regionalism by preaching the existence of some sort of natural habit or inclination to cohesion and togetherness present in the area, and occasionally helped themselves with the history tool: Various initiators of regional and sub-regional cooperation referred to history, presenting a carefully selected set of historical events of regional cooperation in order to support their regionalist visions.

Trade relation or political domination in the pre-nation state era was employed to present region-building as a natural process. A specific version of history suggested a certain naturally founded, generic community of destiny in the BSR. Hanseatic trade or the geo-political figure of *Dominium Maris Baltici* or *Mare Nostrum* were among the most spectacular constructs.<sup>141</sup>

In 1990, for example, a number of leading politicians, journalists, authors, academics and intellectuals met in the Finnish town of Kotka in order to discuss the perspectives of a ‘New Hansa’, and thereby created another label for the vision of a peaceful and prosperous BSR that would tie in with its historical antecedents: the “Spirit of Kotka”.<sup>142</sup> The discursive creation of a certain cohesive spirit is an important factor in most region-building projects.

Region-building begins in the field of ideas and public debates, and is supposed to convince participants of a common background by making common values come into force.<sup>143</sup>

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140 See Official Website of the Baltic Sea Portal [www.balticsea.net](http://www.balticsea.net) [28 December 2007].

141 MUSIAL Kazimierz: Education, Research and the Baltic Sea Region-building. In: Id. (ed.): *Approaching Knowledge Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. Gdańsk/Berlin 2002, pp. 42-60, here p. 47.

142 See SUNDQVIST Ulf: The Spirit of Kotka. In: *Framtider international*, 1/1991, p. 4.

143 MAKARYCHEV Andrey S.: Where the North Meets the East. Europe’s ‘Dimensionalism’ and Poland’s ‘Marginality Strategy’. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 3/2004, pp. 299-315, here p. 301.

Regionalism requires social stimulation and validation, and as such it is likely to be prominent in those regions that effectively mobilise a unifying historic identity and distinctive consciousness.<sup>144</sup>

The promoters and initiators of regionalism, i.e. the ‘region-builders’, frequently avail themselves of identity-related arguments in order to support the idea of togetherness in some way, and thus, to legitimise the objectives of respective region-building efforts. References to alleged historic predecessors are very common argumentative tools in this respect. The ambition hereinafter is certainly not to give an exhaustive presentation of the images introduced in the course of the region-building process. The following section elaborates on three of the most prominent examples in this regard: The idea of a ‘New Hansa’, mostly promoted by actors with a German background, the notion of a New *Mare Balticum*, and the vision of a *Homo Balticus*, a specific breed of man inhabiting the Baltic Sea rim that was said to have outstanding moral qualities.

### 1. *The Vision of a ‘New Hansa’ and the ‘Spirit of Kotka’*

The idea of a ‘New Hansa’ based on the historical example of the medieval Hanseatic League (Germ. *Hanse*) dates back to one of the early visionaries of Baltic Sea Cooperation, Björn Engholm, then Prime Minister of the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>145</sup> In his view, it was not only one of the first manifestations of cooperative cohesion in this region, it rather held the allure of a cross-border bottom-up vision fostering enhanced and peaceful relations between East and West.<sup>146</sup> In fact, the historic Hanseatic League was a union of trading guilds, whose establishment in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century tackled a revolution of commerce in medieval Europe and gradually turned the region into the mainspring of continental trade: for three centuries, it linked more than one hundred cities and enhanced the convergence of their peoples, cultures and economies, with a catchment area stretching from Novgorod in the east of the BSR to London and Bruges in the west of the North Sea.<sup>147</sup>

After being rediscovered by a group of politicians and intellectuals, the notion of a Hanseatic spirit or legacy eventually became one of the most popular images promoted in the context of the new regionalist wave.<sup>148</sup> In 1980, a network of towns and cities called ‘Hansa’ was founded upon a German initiative. It committed itself to the purpose

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144 DOWNS William M.: Regionalism in the European Union. Key Concepts and Project Overview. In: Journal of European Integration, No. 3/2002, pp. 171-177, here p. 172.

145 Another historical entity that could have equally been referred to is the Kalmar Union, a political association that once brought the kingdoms of Sweden (including Finland), Norway (including Iceland and the Faroe Islands) and Denmark (1397-1521) together, uniting the entire Nordic area for the first time in history. For more details, see WEIBULL Jörgen: Swedish History in Outline. Stockholm 1993.

146 Engholm even established I think tank within his state chancellery, the so-called “Denkfabrik”, which he mandated to evolve these ideas on academic grounds. See WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. The Genesis of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a historical case study. In: NORDEUROPA Forum 1/2005, pp. 3-20, here pp. 9-10.

147 For more details, see KIRBY David: Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period. The Baltic World 1492-1772, London 1990.

148 See DELLENBRANT Jan Åke: The Baltic Sea Co-operation – Visions and realities. In: BALDERSHEIM Harald/STÅHLBERG Krister (eds): Nordic Region-Building in a European Perspective. Aldershot 1999, pp. 83-97, here p. 83.

of “acting in the spirit of the border-transcending idea of the Hanseatic League” and the associated historical experience, in order to “revive the spirit and the ideas of the European city/municipality.”<sup>149</sup> Some of the BSR ‘leagues’ established after 1989 even labelled themselves literally ‘Hansa’ or ‘Hanseatic’, e.g. the Social Hansa (founded in 1993) and the Hanseatic Parliament (2004).

Along the German Baltic and North Sea coast, Hansa has still a close-to “religious” meaning, and the myth of the Hanseatic age is still present in every day life. However – be this enthusiasm based on historical experiences or not – there are strong tendencies of idealising the original nature of the league. As Yrjö Kaukiainen pointed out – there is a doubtful ambivalence about the so-called ‘Hanseatic spirit’:

When you take away the trimmings – the Hanseatic houses, the diets – what Hanse was really about, was making money, which is fine, but to speak of a higher Hanseatic ethos is going a bit too far. [...] The Hanse could be quite an aggressive organisation and was perfectly willing to engage in boycotts, embargoes, even outright war to accomplish its ends.<sup>150</sup>

Despite the league’s dramatic collapse,<sup>151</sup> many cities in the BSR have maintained the ties to their glorious past as Hanse cities. This mainly applies to German and Dutch cities, whereas Sweden and Poland always seemed to be more reserved in respect to this sort of anachronistic identification with local history.<sup>152</sup>

The New Hansa was not equally attractive to all regional actors. Instead of references to remote history, Scandinavian scholars preferred imagining the future co-operation across the Baltic Sea within the framework tried out among the Nordic countries.<sup>153</sup>

Most significantly, Swedish Chambers of Commerce and of Skilled Crafts are not active members of the Hanseatic Parliament, and Swedish cities show comparably low interest in the context of the New Hansa City Network.

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149 Hansa Statutes, art. 2. Official website of the Hansa network [www.hanse.org](http://www.hanse.org) [20 October 2007].

150 KAUKIAINEN Yrjö, cited by SANDER Gordon: Off Centre. Baltic hands link across a troubled sea. In: Financial Times, 8 April 2000.

151 After Dutch merchants had aggressively tried to challenge the league and to break the Hansa monopoly and the Hansa capital had shifted from the German City of Lübeck to Gdańsk in Poland, the league was gradually weakened by a set of unfavourable developments in the area, such as repeated clashes with Denmark and later on, the Dutch-Hanseatic War (1438-1444), where it was finally defeated. Moreover, the rise of national and territorial economies left no more room for the sort of cross-border trading the Hanseatic merchants, towns and cities conducted by way of the league structures. Ultimately, the association failed to withstand the multiple challenges and imploded in the late 16th century. See POSTEL Rainer: The Hanseatic League and its Decline. Paper presented at the Central Connecticut State University, New Britain. 20 November 1996.

152 VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international. En antologi om Stockholm i en regionaliserad och globaliserad värld*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 24. The German and the Dutch enthusiasm are based on the fact that, within the Hanseatic League, at first, there was a strong German dominance, which was over the years transposed to the western part of the North Sea, i.e. the Netherlands. See POSTEL Rainer: The Hanseatic League and its Decline. Paper presented at the Central Connecticut State University, New Britain. 20 November 1996.

153 MUSIAL Kazimierz: Education, Research and the Baltic Sea Region-building. In: Id. (ed.): *Approaching Knowledge Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. Gdańsk/Berlin 2002, pp. 42-60, here p. 48.

When the Premier of German Land Schleswig-Holstein Björn Engholm popularized the concept 'New Hansa', many actors were reluctant to engage in his project, as it reminded them more of German hegemony than of a time of peaceful and prosperous cooperation.<sup>154</sup>

In contrast to Germany, for Sweden and Finland the notion of 'Hansa' has always had negative connotations as their Hanseatic experience was not a success story. Therefore, for them the idea raised after 1989 of reconstructing a 'New Hansa' was not the most attractive one. The vision of this 'New Hansa' was also the guiding slogan of a conference held in the Finnish town of Kotka in June/July 1990, which was organised by the Swedish Institute of Future Studies (*Institutet för framtidsstudier*) upon a German initiative.<sup>155</sup> The Swedish public debate in the aftermath of this international conference was dominated by the general and serious concern about a newly arising "Teutonic" dominance after the German reunification.<sup>156</sup> Another divisive aspect about these Teutonic ideas of revitalising Baltic Sea cooperation was the fact that the ancient Hansa model had a clear economic focus, whereas the Nordic model of regionalism, as best materialised in the Nordic Cooperation has always strictly stuck to soft policy areas and was traditionally based on the broad substance of cultural and ideological commonality.<sup>157</sup> Sweden and Finland certainly bore a similar feeling when the issue reappeared in the context of their EU accession, and again, much was said about the "Baltic dimension" of their membership and their potential of leading the renaissance of the "old Hanseatic spirit".<sup>158</sup>

## 2. *The Tale of Homo Balticus*

In the context of this chapter, yet another 'historiophile' vision about the Baltic Sea has to be considered: the idea of a Baltic Man or *Homo Balticus*, i.e. a specific human breed that is said to inhabit the Baltic Sea coastal area. Even though this image got comparably low advertency around the Baltic Sea, it can still serve as a good example of how colourful the Baltic Sea region-building discourses were in the early construction period. It was particularly promoted by one of the newly emerged Baltic Sea regional associations, the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC). The UBC is what Sander called the "most visionary (or the most deluded) of the new Baltic leagues."<sup>159</sup> The UBC introduced *Homo Balticus* in the context of its foundation in 1991 as some sort of

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154 See ENGELIN Hilde Dominique: *The Construction of a Region in the Baltic Sea Area*. Geneva 2004, p. 14.

155 See VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international. En antologi om Stockholm i en regionaliserad och globaliserad värld*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 24. And *Seminarium i Kotka/Finland, den 28 juni – 1 juli 1990. "Den nya Hansan. Revitaliseringen av Nordeuropa."* Conference material provided by the Swedish Institute of Future Studies, Stockholm.

156 See HÖGSELIUS Per: *Tyskt inflytande runt Östersjön kom av sig*. In: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 7 maj 2004.

157 See SIMOULIN Vincent: *The State of Nordic Cooperation in a Changing Europe*. Toulouse 2000, p. 1.

158 See VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international. En antologi om Stockholm i en regionaliserad och globaliserad värld*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 24.

159 See SANDER Gordon: *Off Centre. Baltic hands link across a troubled sea*. In: *Financial Times*, 8 April 2000.

enlightened and morally superior breed, a type of man that holds a unique set of characteristics – all of them distinctly coined by the Baltic surrounding.

There is no doubt that Baltic cities are linked by *Homo Balticus*. Why the people from mainland say: ‘you are different’? First of all, *Homo Balticus* has always been in contact with the Sea. He struggled with it during his work – fishing, sailing and sporting. Living by the Sea, he received the beneficial effect of rich aerosols, which made him calm and eager to work. Without doubt, *Homo Balticus* is calm and hard working. *Homo Balticus* is interested in the world. [...] He enthusiastically welcomes befriended and invited guests. Yes – he is for sure hospitable. An inhabitant of a Baltic city is in touch with nature in his every day life in its richest and most secret form – the Sea. [...] Yes – *Homo Balticus* loves nature. He is very sensitive to its threatened values and unites eagerly to protect it. *Homo Balticus* is very active. He still sets out for work, knowledge and entertainment but always comes back to his town. [...] *Homo Balticus* is not afraid of risk, he is full of initiative, he is open to technical and organizational inventions. *Homo Balticus*, thanks to his contacts with the greatest masterpiece – nature – is sensitive to art.<sup>160</sup>

This description was published in a UBC information folder aiming to give an overview of the association’s founding principles. In its 1998-1999 Action Plan, the UBC even set out the ambition of furthering the knowledge about *Homo Balticus* in order to strengthen the image of Baltic identity.<sup>161</sup> Even though it is the UBC that is vigorously promoting this special breed of man, the idea has also appeared in a very different context. The notion of a certain human species native to the Baltic littoral has often occurred in the Baltic States during their early post-communist transition phase.

Morality is the core of self-consciousness of the Baltic Man. It is one of those untranslatable and thus essential words. [...] Morality is a mark of the divine order and the godly imperative goodness in a man.<sup>162</sup>

After 1996, Algirdas Patackas, then member of the Lithuanian *Seimas* (parliament) repeatedly adopted the notion of Baltic moral exclusiveness to distinguish Baltic people from the mass of Soviet rulers. These attempts of distancing themselves from the past were, as Balockaite put it, part of the “healing process” after the Soviet experience.<sup>163</sup> In this case, the act of promoting the idea of a morally supreme ‘Baltic Man’ was clearly related to the general process of political and ideological transition. In Estonia, a similar discourse was linked with the process of European integration. The ‘Baltic Man’ was thought to especially qualify for instant EU membership. In one of his imaginative speeches, Toomas Hendrik Ilves outlined the notion of what he called “*Yule-land*” (literally ‘North-land’), a visionary spatial entity also inhabited by a certain breed of man. In his description, this entity would extend from Estonia and Finland, over Sweden and Norway to the British Isles. According to Ilves, these countries share a stock of normative principles that determine their societies and their people’s whole way of being and acting. In contrast to the Orthodox East and the Catholic South, this *Yule-land* would be based on protestant ethics, progressive modernism and the diligence

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160 UBC information folder 1993.

161 See UBC Action Plan 1998-1999. Official UBC website [www.ubc.net](http://www.ubc.net) [30 November 2007].

162 PATAKAS Algirdas: *Redos ratas*. Kaunas 1988, p. 2. Translation by BALOCKAITE Rasa: Demystifying Social Reality. European Integration processes in Lithuania 2003. Kaunas 2003, p. 3.

163 See *ibid.*, p. 4.

of its hard-working people, a picture that is remarkably close to the image produced by the UBC.<sup>164</sup>

*Jõul* in Estonia, *Joulu* in Finland, *Jul* in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and *Yule* on the British Isles. [...] Today, these peoples share a common mentality expressed in rationality, stubbornness and diligence. They rank the highest in the world in Internet connections and in mobile phone penetration, lowest in the world in corruption.<sup>165</sup>

Visionary statements of this type recurrently suggest the idea of the Baltic Sea area and certain parts of it respectively to be united in some sort of innate or even genetically inbred moral exclusiveness, if not supremacy. A less popular connotation in this regard is offered by modern history: precedent ideas about the existence of a morally and ethnically superior breed of man inhabiting the area were produced in the context of Scientific Racism under the German Nazi Regime. The proto Nazi race theorist Hans F. K. Günther identified the Aryan race to be constituted by two major ethnical strands: the Nordic and the Eastern Baltic one. The Nordic-Baltic race was perceived as the natural leader and the essentially Moral Man.<sup>166</sup>

Even though this comparison might appear overdrawn if referred to in this context it nevertheless helps to characterise the argumentative strategies politicians and other region-building actors have tried to apply in this regard. The idea of moral supremacy albeit on very different grounds has also a strong tradition in the Nordic context.<sup>167</sup> Even though these visions were sometimes carried too far and became “counterproductive to efficient practical co-operation” they nevertheless helped to create a feeling of common identity around the Baltic Sea.<sup>168</sup>

#### *V. The Argument of Challenges – United in Diversity*

Another argumentative tool that was implemented in the Baltic Sea region-building discourse was the accentuation of challenges. While many associations and initiatives in the early post Cold War wave of regionalism availed themselves of the above-mentioned history tool, others strictly abstained from the attempt to link present ambitions to any sort of alleged historical predecessor, or to avail themselves of identity-related arguments. These region-building projects rather appealed to the “other side of the coin”, the differences, challenges and problems that the region was and is facing in present days, and promoted Baltic Sea Regionalism as a useful forum to overcome obviously existing differences as well as to find constructive solutions for common problems such as the lack of infrastructure, illegal migration, drugs- and arms trafficking, environmental degradation etc.. Instead of reviving historical concepts, they chose to emphasise the fact that the BSR has never been a homogenous entity and that,

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164 See ILVES Toomas Hendrik: “Estonia as a Nordic country”, speech given at the Swedish Institute of Foreign Affairs, 14 December 1999. Official Website of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [www.vm.ee](http://www.vm.ee) [25 November 2007].

165 Ibid.

166 See also FISCHER Eugen/GÜNTHER Hans F.K.: *Deutsche Köpfe nordischer Rasse*. Munich 1927.

167 For more details, see ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: *The Geopolitics of Nordic Identity from Composite States to Nation-States*. Copenhagen 1997.

168 See DELLENBRANT Jan Åke: *The Baltic Sea Co-operation. Visions and Realities*. In: BALDERSHEIM Harald/STÅHLBERG Krister (eds): *Nordic Region-Building in a European Perspective*. Aldershot 1999, pp. 83-97, here p. 86.

throughout history, the Baltic Sea States have mostly regarded themselves as parts of other regional constructs such as the Nordic sphere or Continental Europe. A gaze back into history shows that indeed the powers surrounding the Baltic Sea have “more often been brought together in conflict than in cooperation.”<sup>169</sup>

The CBSS is one of the outstanding examples in this regard. In contrast to all the enthusiastic visions promoted by other regional associations and initiatives, this organisation rather committed itself to the functional challenges that emerged after the political changes of 1989/1990.

The recent dramatic changes in Europe herald a new era of European relations where the confrontation and division of the past is replaced by partnership and cooperation. An enhanced and strengthened Baltic cooperation is a natural and logical consequence of these events.<sup>170</sup>

The CBSS never tried to build on a value-laden rhetoric but rather aimed at pointing out the differences to emphasise the respective need for cooperation. In one of her public statements, Gabriele Kötschau, then CBSS Secretariat Director, took up the issue of Baltic togetherness and the challenge and problem of “branding the region”.

Why should we ‘brand’ this region that has much in common, but has even more differences? What is the Baltic Sea Region known for? [...] What do we have in common? One has to talk of something intangible, the ‘Baltic brand’ as a combination of attributes, something that is both tangible – by geography and intangible – through memory and emotional attachment to an ideal of the Baltic Sea. [...] We as nations are so different – so how to convince us to act as one region with one brand identity? Exactly for this reason! We are rich on diversity and it is exactly for this reason that we must come together. Why should we look homogenous? We *are not*! The link between perception and reality – that is the art of selling, even if the Baltic Sea Region has a lot to sell, the buyers must believe in it – and we ourselves, convinced of our region, should be encouraged to do so.<sup>171</sup>

VASAB 2010 (Visions and Strategies about the Baltic 2010) provides yet another albeit less clear-cut case in point. In most of its recent declarations and action plans the organisation is not reluctant to talk openly about the problems that the region is facing *because* of its political, cultural and structural disparity.

The BSR is maybe the least homogenous region in Europe. This creates a demand for internal cohesion and is a source of particular market potentials. [...] The BSR spans arctic to temperate climate zones. Its 103 million inhabitants live in 11 different countries or parts thereof, in which as many major languages are spoken.<sup>172</sup>

However, in its founding declarations, VASAB 2010 was less outspoken. It also appealed to the history tool by clearly emphasizing the historical background of its strategic ambitions and defined the *re*-integration of the region as its “top objective”.

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169 KNUDSEN Olav F. (ed.): *Stability and Security in the Baltic Sea Region*. London 1999, p. ix.

170 CBSS Copenhagen Declaration, agreed on at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea States, Copenhagen 5-6 March 1992. Official CBSS website [www.cbss.st](http://www.cbss.st) [23 December 2007].

171 KÖTSCHAU Gabriele: *Branding the Region*. What, by the way, is “*Uusimaa*”? Strömsborg Direct. In: *Baltinfo*. CBSS Newsletter, November-December 2006, p. 12.

172 See VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme 2001. Available on the official VASAB website [www.vasab.org.pl](http://www.vasab.org.pl) [30 November 2007].



The BSR, in the millennium until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, developed a rich network in many areas of society. Trade was widespread; the Baltic Sea provided an important link in the transport system. The Viking Age, the Hanseatic Epoch and other transnational networks succeeded one another. The spread of Christianity, during the 10<sup>th</sup> century, played an important role in cultural co-operation. Regional development occurred along the shores of the Baltic Sea (with corresponding urban networks), expanding from there to the hinterland. After World War II, Europe was split into two parts. Most contacts across this curtain were cut off. Since the recent end of this period of separation re-integration is a top issue.<sup>173</sup>

Yet another example in the above-mentioned context is the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI), launched by Finland in 1997. The Finnish initiators completely refrained from any sort of ideology-related rhetoric and simply counted on the argument of European responsibility. Paavo Lipponen, then Finnish Prime Minister and founding father of the NDI, put it as follows:

With the accession of Finland and Sweden, the European Union now extends from the Mediterranean to just a few kilometres from the Barents Sea. The Union has thus acquired a natural 'northern dimension.' We need a policy for this dimension too.<sup>174</sup>

The fact that Finland aimed at bringing some of its foremost geopolitical interests onto the EU working agenda was probably the basic reasoning behind this strategic choice. The initiators did not employ any region-based argumentation; they rather chose to point at the problems and challenges this region was facing, underlining the inherent responsibility of the EU not to close the eyes in front of its mission. Joenniemi and Lehti actually identified this aspect as part of the reason why the EU ND never gained much public support or even cognition in the region.

No narrative has been coined in the context of the NDI that would aim at reconfiguring the past and linking into earlier historical experiences. There is nothing like the *Hanse* of the Baltic Sea related discourse or the elevation of the *Pomor* period when imagining a Baltic Region. Since there is no obviously identity-related rhetoric present in the discourse on the NDI, people do not feel that the matter is one of considerable urgency and relevance in relation to who 'we' are in the post Cold War period.<sup>175</sup>

The utilitarian and functional approach applied in the EU ND context did obviously refrain from joining the regional discourse about inclusive Baltic togetherness. In recent years, the question whether this actually favoured the effectiveness of the policy or not was part of a wider academic debate about the overall success or failure of the policy.<sup>176</sup>

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173 VASAB 2010. Towards a Framework for Spatial Development in the BSR. Third Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Development. December 1992. Official VASAB website [www.vasab.org.pl](http://www.vasab.org.pl) [30 November 2007].

174 LIPPONEN Paavo: The European Union Needs a Policy for the Northern Dimension. Speech delivered at the conference "Barents region today" in Rovaniemi/Finland, 15 September 1997. Official website of the Finnish Government [www.vn.fi/vn/english/speech/970915e.html](http://www.vn.fi/vn/english/speech/970915e.html) [26 December 2007].

175 See JOENNIEMI Pertti/LEHTI Marko: On the encounter between the Nordic and the northern. Torn Apart but Meeting Again? Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI): Working Paper, 11/2001, pp. 32-33.

176 For more details, see chapter "Evaluation: The EU ND Reconsidered", p.148-.

#### *F. Mental Geography – The Constitution of the BSR as a Spatial Concept*

The notion of a region generally implies the existence of a spatial unit, which is at least to some extent self-contained and thereby evidently recognisable and delimitable as an entity. In fact, after the end of the Cold War, part of the European North has developed into some sort of regional unit: the BSR. Numerous regional initiatives, associations and networks carrying the Baltic label give us a ‘proof’ that in fact, there must be some sort of regional entity in Northern Europe that is gathering around the Baltic Sea. Still, ascribing a cohesive image to an area as ample and diverse as the BSR seems to be a bold venture. Jasper von Altenbockum chose a quite provocative way to put it:

There is nothing, which doesn’t exist at [*sic!*] the Baltic. A politician would however struggle if asked: is there a Baltic? Because he would have to say: Oh yes, there are Baltic programs, Baltic concepts, Baltic sub-regions, Baltic councils and Baltic conferences. [As] said: there is nothing, which doesn’t exist at the Baltic Sea. Something for everyone and nothing for all.<sup>177</sup>

In fact, is there any supportive evidence for ‘Baltic togetherness’ besides the mere existence of ‘Baltic’ associations? The BSR is a uniquely diverse geographical area, on the political as well as on the economic, cultural and ideological level. What actually accounts for comprehensive Balticness besides the plain fact of physical vicinity? These are questions raised in the context of “mental geography”.<sup>178</sup> In contrast to physical geography, mental geography is widely determined by normative factors, such as identity, values and cultural connotations.

Identity markers always involve a choice (what we wish to belong to?), because the social world is defined not just by physical constraints but also in spiritual and normative categories.<sup>179</sup>

After the end of the Cold War, the spatial framework in Northern Europe has considerably altered and diversified, a development that Jukarainen labelled the “growth of spatial complexity”.<sup>180</sup> Today, the region features a variety of virtually constructed sub-spaces, such as the ‘Nordic’ or the ‘Baltic sphere’. The following chapters deal with the consistencies of the ‘Baltic Sea Region’ as a spatial concept, questioning and analysing the various sub-spaces that have emerged in the course of the recent international developments.

#### *I. Is ‘Nordic’ Plus ‘Baltic’ Equal to Inclusive ‘Balticness’?*

The demise of the unnatural Cold War division and the national independence of the three Baltic States paved the way for different forms of regional cohesion in the BSR, and thus, for the development of an inclusive ‘Balticness’. Formerly isolated sub-spaces

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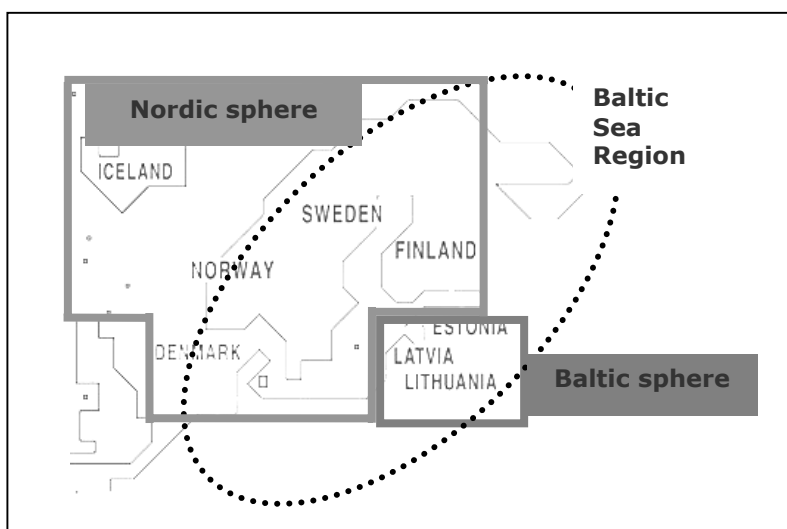
177 VON ALTENBOCKUM Jasper, cited by Tassinari. See TASSINARI Fabrizio: *Mare Europaeum. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe*. Copenhagen 2004, pp.157-158.

178 See chapter “The Discursive Construction of Regions”, p. 170-.

179 MAKARYCHEV Andrey S.: *Where the North Meets the East. Europe’s ‘Dimensionalism’ and Poland’s ‘Marginality Strategy’*. In: *Cooperation and Conflict* No. 3/2004, pp. 299-315, here p. 301.

180 See JUKARAINEN Pirjo: *Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal*. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 364.

could now be drawn together on various levels of action and in different policy areas. In order to grasp the nature of the ‘Balticness’ resulting from these opportunities, one could ask for its constitutive elements and examine their respective potential for cohesion across geographical, political and functional borders. The main two regionalist entities that met in the course of Baltic Sea Regionalism are the well-established ‘Nordic sphere’ on the one hand, and the ‘Baltic sphere’ on the other. This dichotomy also reflects the former Cold War divide, which in Northern Europe and particularly in the BSR was a matter of the East facing the North rather than the ‘West’. At first glance, it is the diversity *between* these two sub-spaces that seems to be striking, while for themselves, they appear rather uniform and inherently cohesive.<sup>181</sup>



*Figure 3: Mental Sub-Spaces Meeting in the BSR*

What degree and quality of togetherness did the three Baltic States really bring in? To what extent did they close ranks to encounter their Baltic Sea neighbours? On what ideational basis did the Nordic core group interfere with the new regionalist formations emerging in the BSR? By what terms and to what extent did the Nordic five and the Baltic three add up to a comprehensive Baltic i.e. Nordic-Baltic community? Before addressing these questions, it seems helpful to identify the ideological background of both the Nordic and the Baltic sphere, and most importantly, to track the development that these two spatial entities have experienced in recent years. How did the end of the Cold War affect the ideological self-determination of the Nordic sphere, and to what extent did Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania actually strive for ‘Baltic unity’?

### *1. Nordic Togetherness – The Changing Role of Nordic Cooperation*

The fall of the Iron Curtain opened new possibilities for regional and sub-regional co-operation in the BSR. However, also the bipolar constellation of the Cold War period had not been entirely divisive but left some leeway for structural tendencies that deviated from the prevailing ideological block pattern. One of the most substantial

<sup>181</sup> See JAANSON Kaido: The Baltic States and Norden. In: The Baltic Review, Vol. 19. Online Edition. Website of the Journal ‘The Baltic Review’ [www.tbr.ee](http://www.tbr.ee) [12 August 2007].

examples is probably ‘Nordic Cooperation’, a largely informal community for coordination and cooperation established between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, i.e. conglomerating the group of five Nordic States. This cooperative formation never fully adhered to the global logic of the Cold War, which was for most European states in those times, to deliberately toe the line of either of the confronting blocks.<sup>182</sup> However, Nordic Cooperation was not only invented in the wake of East-West-Polarisation; it is rather based on deep historical, cultural and linguistic links, and most importantly, a shared understanding of certain moral values. As early as in the 1880s, the Nordic Countries already started to harmonise their legislation and to elaborate a common set of legal principles.<sup>183</sup> In 1907, they established a Nordic Interparliamentary Union. The system of Nordic Cooperation reached its first zenith in the course of World War I.

During World War I, Nordic co-operation extended into new areas resulting in a greater public awareness of the situation. In many instances, the Nordic area appeared as a single socio-political and economic unit to many observers in Europe and Northern America.<sup>184</sup>

In the early post-war years, Nordic Cooperation was strengthened even further. The Nordic countries established a high-level network that incorporated their governments, officials, national assemblies and to some extent also their respective political parties and trade organisations. The most prominent indication for the growing Nordic ‘witness’ was certainly the practice of retaining a joint Nordic seat in the Council of the League of Nations, filling it on rotation.<sup>185</sup>

In 1919, they founded the ‘Norden’ community, whose activities at popular level such as sister-town projects remarkably increased mutual understanding, solidarity and togetherness as well as the international visibility of the promoted Nordic unity. Today, ‘Norden’ has representations all around Scandinavia and the BSR.<sup>186</sup> From the early 1930s onwards, the Nordic heads of government and ministers held occasional meetings and consulted each other on an informal basis.<sup>187</sup> However, the fact that the five states went through very different experiences in World War II temporarily weakened the role of the Nordic Cooperation system as far as concrete cooperative action and international awareness were concerned.<sup>188</sup> The five countries faced widely differing external security constellations, with Germany occupying Norway and Denmark, Great Britain the Faroe Islands and Iceland, and Sweden retaining a neutral position. Between 1941 and 1944, Finland allied itself with Germany against the Soviet threat. Some point out that despite the dividing nature of this Second World War experience, the ideological

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182 See JOENNIEMI Pertti/LEHTI Marko: On the encounter between the Nordic and the northern. Torn Apart but Meeting Again? Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI): Working Paper, 11/2001, p. 4.

183 See WENDT Frantz: Co-operation in the Nordic Countries. Achievements and Obstacles. Stockholm 1981, pp. 11-12.

184 BONNEN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Co-operation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 22.

185 See *ibid.*, here p. 22.

186 See Official website of the Norden Association. [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org) [5 March 2008].

187 See REBAS Hain: Baltic Co-operation. Problem or Opportunity? In: *Perspectives*, No. 9/1997-1998, pp. 64-76, here p. 69.

188 See BONNEN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Co-operation. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 20.

ties of solidarity continued to grow. This created a fertile soil for the new rise of Nordic Cooperation after 1945.<sup>189</sup>

In the course of the Cold War, the links were again considerably strengthened through both stronger isolation, and as a consequence thereof, gradual institutionalisation. At first, the Nordic States seemed to fail to keep out of the logic of global polarisation: Denmark and Norway joined NATO in 1949, while Sweden chose to pursue a policy of permanent neutrality.<sup>190</sup> From 1948 onwards, Finland was bound with the Soviet Union by way of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (TFCMA). However, the Nordic group managed to develop a unique political and security identity that helped to create a virtual entity, later called the system of 'Nordic Balance'.<sup>191</sup> They all sought to pursue a policy of modification, essentially by limiting Soviet involvement in Finland and US involvement in Norway, and thus eventually found a way to circumvent total Nordic entrapment in either of the two blocks.<sup>192</sup>

In 1952, the Nordic Countries established the Nordic Council as a forum for inter-parliamentary cooperation and discourse.<sup>193</sup> Even though the Council decisions were not binding, the individual Nordic governments often chose to follow its recommendations. The Nordic countries created a Nordic passport union, a common labour market, and a Nordic social insurance convention to serve all Nordic citizens. In 1971, these important steps were followed by the establishment of the Nordic Council of Ministers as a platform for coordination and consultation between corresponding Nordic ministries that produced binding decisions on the basis of unanimity.<sup>194</sup> The Cold War surrounding literally furthered the consolidation of Nordic Cooperation. Laursen and Olsen identified the aim of avoiding entrapment in bipolarity as the main factor that encouraged Nordic Cooperation during the Cold War. The Nordic 'we' feeling was strongly determined by their common definition of the respective 'them', i.e. American Capitalism on the one side, and Soviet Bolshevism on the other.<sup>195</sup> Similar conditions applied to the regional self-perception of the Nordic five.

Over the last fifty years the Scandinavian countries [...] have tended to downplay the Baltic component of their national identifications. At the same time, they have downplayed the

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189 See *ibid.*, here p. 22.

190 Iceland had already determined its security political position by permitting the presence of British troops on its territory in 1940. See *ibid.*, p. 30 (note 4).

191 See LODGAARD Sverre: Redefining Norden. In: ØBERG Jan (ed.): Nordic Security in the 1990s. Options in the Changing Europe. London 1992, pp. 281-300, here p. 283.

192 See WIBERG Håkan/WÆVER Ole: Norden in the Cold War Reality. In: ØBERG Jan (ed.): Nordic Security in the 1990s. Options in the Changing Europe. London 1992, pp. 13-34, here p. 23.

193 Finland entered the Council only in 1956, after the situation with the Soviet Union had been stabilised. In order to allow this important step, Finland had to join under reserve. The Finnish government declared that the Nordic Council would mostly deal with administrative, social and economic questions. Should the Council nevertheless happen to debate military questions Finland would not participate. See ANDRÉN Nils: *Säkerhetspolitikens återkomst. Om säkerhetspolitikens plats i rådsdialogen*. In: SUNDELIUS Bengt/WIKLUND Claes (eds): *Norden i sicksack. Tre spårbyten inom nordiskt samarbete*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 275-303, here p. 281.

194 See TUNANDER Ola: Nordic Cooperation. Oslo 1999. Available online <http://odin.dept.no> [23 December 2007].

195 See LAURSEN Johnny N./OLSEN Thorsten B.: A Nordic Alternative to Europe? The Interdependence of Denmark's Nordic and European policies, 1945-1998. CORE Working Paper, 2/1998. Copenhagen 1998, pp. 10-11.

general European character of their historical experiences and gradually replaced Northern Europe with '*Norden*' when talking of their collective identities. Still today, for many Scandinavians, the secret to economic and political success in this remote and sparsely populated part of Europe lies precisely in keeping distance to all the neighbouring powers, Germany and Russia in particular.<sup>196</sup>

According to Connolly, this 'negative' way of defining the 'self' against the 'other' is part of *any* process of identity construction.

Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty [...].<sup>197</sup>

However, in the Nordic case, this effect became particularly important for the consolidation and institutionalisation of that regionalist formation. On the other hand, the bipolar setting certainly also posed a rather rigid framework to Nordic cooperation, hindering any sort of deep-going political collaboration between the five: From the 1950s onwards, Nordic Cooperation was roughly restricted to soft and low policies, and most importantly, it was to exclude external security or defence related policy areas.<sup>198</sup> Anyway, these negative effects of the Cold War constellation should not be overestimated as history has shown that the Nordic Countries have always been very reluctant in these policy fields.<sup>199</sup> The Nordic Countries made several attempts to deepen their economic cooperation. However, these intentions were roughly opposed by Norwegian industry and its unwillingness to establish a customs union. In 1960, the countries that were unable or unwilling to join the newly established European Economic Community (EEC) founded the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). EFTA had a strong stimulating effect on intra-Nordic trade.<sup>200</sup> Internationally, the EFTA was often perceived as some sort of reluctant and reserved alternative to full EC membership. In fact, the commitments of EFTA-members exclusively remained on the intergovernmental level. Progressive supranationalization as provided in the framework of the overall European integration process was not intended.

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196 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Nordic Countries in the Baltic Sea Region. In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): Neo-Nationalism or Regionality. The Restructuring of Political Space Around the Baltic Rim. Stockholm 1997, pp. 26-53, here p. 26.

197 CONNOLLY William: Identity/Difference. Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox. Minnesota 1991, p. 64.

198 In 1948, Sweden had initiated negotiations on the establishment of a state-oriented Nordic security and defence union. However, these efforts eventually failed because of the diverging foreign policy traditions as well as the different post-war threat perceptions. See RUHALA Kalevi: Alliance and Non-Alignment at the Onset of the 21st Century. In: RIES Thomas/HULDT Bo/MÖRTBERG Jan/DAVIDSON Elisabeth (ed.): The New Northern Security Agenda. Perspectives from Finland and Sweden. Strategic Yearbook 2004, pp. 103-118, here p. 114. An exception was the co-operation of the Nordic countries in the United Nations where they attempted to co-ordinate their voting behaviour in the General Assembly, and thus, to pool their power with regard to common Nordic interests. For more details, see WIKLUND Lena: *Nordisk samling i FN*. In: SUNDELIUS Bengt/WIKLUND Claes (eds): *Norden i sicksack. Tre spårbyten inom nordiskt samarbete*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 253-274, here p. 281.

199 See BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Co-operation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 20.

200 See ibd., here p. 25.

The development of the European project, and more generally, of Western and transatlantic integration, has had remarkable impact on the traditional meaning of the concept of Nordic togetherness.<sup>201</sup> Each of the five Nordic States made very different choices in the context of European (and transatlantic) integration. The Danish accession to the (then) EC in 1973 has already altered the balance of togetherness within the Nordic group. One of the Nordic partners became a full EC member, while Norway voted against the accession and remained – as part of some sort of ‘reluctant alternative’, within EFTA, together with Sweden, Iceland and (then associated) Finland. Moreover, only two out of the five, namely Iceland and Norway, were among the founding states of NATO in 1949. Sweden and Finland entered the EU at the same time, in 1995. However, it was only Finland that eventually joined the ‘Euroland’ in 2004.

The membership applications and subsequent accessions to the EU had repercussions on Nordic institutions. At a special session of the Nordic Council in November 1991, it was decided that Nordic countries should try to actively influence the developments in Europe. In 1995, a thorough reform of the Nordic Council was initiated. Nordic co-operation was regarded as a ‘bridge’ between the Nordic EU members and outsiders. ‘*Norden*’ would not be an alternative to ‘Europe’, but a part of European co-operation.<sup>202</sup>

Anyway, in political practice there was little evidence to be found for Swedish, Danish or Finnish ambitions to create some kind of ‘Nordic Bloc’ within the Union.<sup>203</sup> Henrik Wilén, Director of the Nordic Institute in Finland (NIFIN), found very charming words to counter this type of assessment.

In terms of their attitudes to the historic process of integration, which is in progress in Europe, the Nordic countries are marching out of step. [...] That is the clichéd view, which admittedly has some basis in fact.<sup>204</sup>

In fact, despite an indisputable range of shared interests, Sweden has always tried to avoid the establishment of permanent alliances of interest both as a self-standing

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201 The Europeanisation of Nordic Cooperation has been subject to many academic studies. The excellent findings of e.g. Vincent Simoulin should be mentioned at this point. See SIMOULIN Vincent: *La Coopération nordique. L'organisation régionale de l'Europe du Nord depuis la tentative autonome jusqu'à l'adaptation à l'Europe*. Paris 1999.

202 BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Co-operation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 25.

203 One of the few examples for active Nordic Cooperation in European affairs was the concerted approach towards the Schengen Convention on free movement of persons. In May 1994, Denmark happened to be the first Nordic State to apply for the Schengen observer status. At a session of the Nordic Council in Reykjavik in February 1995, the Nordic prime ministers decided that all Nordic states should participate in the Schengen regime in order to maintain the Nordic Passport Union. In December 1996, Finland, Sweden and Denmark signed the Accession Treaties, while Iceland and Norway adopted Cooperation Agreements. This intra-Nordic arrangement eventually helped to preserve the Nordic Passport Regime. See SCHARF Jakob: Schengen and the Nordic Countries. Recent Developments. In: DEN BOER Monika (ed.): *Schengen Still Going Strong. Evaluation and Update*. European Institute of Public Administration. Maastricht 2000, pp. 37-41, here p. 38.

204 WILÉN Henrik: Will EU enlargement diminish Nordic cooperation? October 2002. Website of Virtual Finland <http://virtual.finland.fi> [25 January 2008].

regional actor, and later, as an EU member state.<sup>205</sup> Sweden has also applied for EU membership without ever consulting its Nordic partners. They in turn regarded the abrupt announcement of membership application as a signpost for Sweden's lacking and potentially decreasing Nordic solidarity. Even though eventually, Finland joined the EU at the same time, the Finnish public was among the most polemic in this regard.<sup>206</sup>

Also the Swedish 'no' against an accession to the European Monetary Union (EMU) was a strong setback for Nordic integration since it cemented the intra-Nordic constellation for many years to come instead of eliminating existing boundaries towards Finland and, in the long term, towards Denmark. Just as in the EMU context, the three Nordic EU Member States often have different opinions about European key issues, and Nordic politicians openly refuse the idea a 'Nordic bloc' within the EU. The Prime Ministers do meet up prior to every EU summit. However, there seem to be no plans or prospects for a joint Nordic strategy within the EU. On selected occasions, there actually appeared to be some sort of Nordic unity on certain EU issues.

One important and also very popular example is the alleged 'joint' performance at the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) leading to the Amsterdam Treaty in 1996. Indeed, Denmark, Sweden and Finland did all seem to have very similar interests: they all claimed institutional openness and transparency, highlighted the importance of environmental policies and strove for a proper administrative and political preparation of enlargement. However, in spite of actively coordinating each other's positions and presenting themselves as a united bloc, they all decided to act as individual member states emphasizing similar but still *different* aspects in the course of the following IGC sessions.<sup>207</sup> This pattern of behaviour, i.e. of taking different ways on the basis of similar interests, is symptomatic for Nordic EU membership. The different and sometimes diverging attitudes towards integration support the argument that as for the EU context the supposed 'togetherness' of the Nordic member states, i.e. Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, is more of a cliché than a reality. To put it differently, in most cases, it is more of a coincidence than a rule. The Nordic EU countries seem to pursue similar agendas, but based on different perceptions of interest, and most importantly for the EU context, without any reference to their common Nordic heritage and togetherness.

Turning to the more Nordic specific reasons as to why permanent co-ordination has not materialized, it is of primary importance to note that the Nordic region is not fully represented in the EU. This means that Nordic countries are split as a bloc, each with its own interests and approaches towards the EU.<sup>208</sup>

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205 See VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international. En antologi om Stockholm i en regionaliserad och globaliserad värld*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 24.

206 See LUIF Paul: *On the Road to Brussels. The Political Dimension of Austria's, Finland's and Sweden's Accession to the European Union*. Vienna 1995, p. 216.

207 See TALLBERG Jonas: *First Pillar. The Domestic Politics of Treaty Reform in Environment and Employment*. In: LAURSEN Finn (ed.): *The Amsterdam Treaty. National Preference Formation, Interstate Bargaining and Outcome*. Odense University Studies History and Social Sciences, Vol. 245. Odense 2002, pp. 453-471, here p. 460.

208 BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: *The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Co-operation in a New and Enlarged European Union*. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 27.



Thus, assuming something like a Scandinavian or Nordic position within the EU-25 or 27 would probably find little empirical evidence in most policy areas. Some argue that the advance of political and economic integration, most importantly, after the end of the Cold War, has *strengthened* the ties between the Nordic States. Hilary Barnes emphasises the case of Finland and the positive effects of its comprehensive integration on the Nordic ‘link’.

Just as Ireland has used EU membership as an instrument to lift it from the shadow of its long and troubled relationship with Britain, so Finland is using the EU as a platform for establishing its liberation from the Soviet influence [...]. Finland’s new position in Europe has an important Nordic dimension. The evolution of Finnish self-confidence in the Post-Cold War world has worked a positive influence on Finland’s relationship with Sweden, its larger, more powerful and richer neighbour. Today, the two can meet on terms of equality.<sup>209</sup>

However, Finland’s liberation from past dependencies did not only boost its self-confidence in geo-political terms, it certainly also enhanced the competition with old *storebror* (Swed. for “big brother”) Sweden.<sup>210</sup> Presumably, this rather widened the gap between the two countries than it deepened their Nordic tie of virtual togetherness. Generally, the post Cold War situation has offered Finland a large range of new opportunities for cooperation and integration, rendering the ‘Nordic way’ one out of many options for its orientation in foreign affairs. Economy and financial services do form an exception in this regard, as cooperation in these fields among the Nordic states and most importantly, between Finland and Sweden, has veritably increased since 1995.<sup>211</sup>

Anyway, this is likely to be a general result of progressive globalisation and can hardly be ascribed to growing Nordic togetherness. There are a few occasions where Finland and Sweden seemed to walk the way of Nordic unity, suggesting joint solutions for certain EU topics. However, practice has shown that also in those cases, other more coincidental factors like good personal relations on the negotiating level had played a more important role than the factor of an alleged Nordic “we-feeling” and togetherness.<sup>212</sup> Bonnén and Søsted are right in emphasizing that Nordic Cooperation

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209 BARNES Hilary: Nordic Togetherness. Let us count the ways. In: Scandinavian Review, Autumn 1998.

210 The image of Sweden being the “big brother” within the Nordic group and, most importantly, in regard to Norway and Finland dates back to the times of Swedish rule 1150 – 1809. The expression is still very common in both political and academic discourse about inter-Nordic relations. See e.g. ERIKSEN Knut Einar: *Norge og Norden. Samarbeid og kollisjon*. In: Atlanterhavskomiteén (ed.): *NATO 50 år. Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk med NATO gjennom 50 år*. Oslo 1999.

211 See BARNES Hilary: Nordic togetherness. Let us count the ways. In: Scandinavian Review, Autumn 1998.

212 The so-called “Petersberg initiative”, i.e. the joint Swedish and Finnish initiative suggesting the inclusion of the so-called “Petersberg Tasks” into the EU Common Security and Defence Policy, has often been interpreted as a showcase for Nordic togetherness in the EU context. See e.g. OJANEN Hanna: Participation and Influence. Sweden, Finland and the Post-Amsterdam Development of the CFSP. European Institute for Security Studies (EU-ISS), Occasional Papers, No. 11. Paris 2000, p. 8. However, Bonnén and Søsted point at the supportive effect of the close personal relation between the (then) Swedish and Finnish foreign ministers and their “uniting social democratic background”. See BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Cooperation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 26.

has traditionally functioned best within a broader international or global framework, and less within a specific *Norden*-centric scale.<sup>213</sup>

There is no consensus as to the overall picture of the EU and this makes it difficult to coordinate policies. Adding to this situation is the fact that there are significant differences between Nordic countries themselves. Having some basic common heritage does not mean that the countries have developed alike in all aspects. [...] The consequence of these disparities is their perception of European cooperation. This is amplified by differences in national attitudes towards European integration as such. [...] Yet another reason why Nordic countries have not reached a higher degree of co-operation has to do with another fact, namely that *Norden* has become a vehicle for co-operation vis-à-vis the external world. Having previously been almost exclusively focused on internal questions, *Norden* has not been transformed into a centralised, political and state-governed entity.<sup>214</sup>

Intra-Nordic activity still has no parallel in the rest of Europe, with civil servants, lobby groups and businessmen meeting on a regular basis, and sheer countless Nordic cultural organisations and initiatives of every kind maintaining a tight network of cooperation and proactive involvement all around the Nordic sphere. However, the Nordic schemes are restricted to uncontroversial policy fields with 'low impact', such as mobility, education, employment, gender equality, environmental protection, culture and research. The mere fact of being 'Nordic' has not had any clear impact on the *major* politico-strategic choices in EU and foreign policy matters of the respective countries. This is closely linked to the question whether Nordic Cooperation can still be considered to have an integrative impact on the wider BSR.<sup>215</sup>

## 2. *The Baltic States and Baltic Unity – Imposition or Expedient?*

In the EU context, and more generally, in world politics it is common to denominate Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania collectively as the 'Baltic States'. However, this geopolitical label has not always been appreciated by the concerning countries themselves as indeed, it has only little to do with their historical background, and most importantly, their individual cultural identity.

In the 1990s, the West has comfortably lumped Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into one geopolitical entity, imposing the 'Baltic unity' on the three historically and culturally diverse nations. [...] The years under the Russian empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Soviet empire between 1945 and 1991 are the only truly common experiences of the Baltic states.<sup>216</sup>

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213 See *ibid.*, here p. 29.

214 *Ibid.*, here p. 27.

215 See chapter "The 'Nordic Bloc' – Driving Core for Baltic Sea Regionalism?", p. 73-.

216 PAULAUSKAS Kęstutis: The Baltic States: Picking Regions, Shedding Myths, Decoding Acronyms. In: Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review, 1-2/2005, pp. 51-65, here p. 52-53.

	establishment of statehood	language	dominant religion	geographical self-identification	cultural influences
Estonia	1918	Finno-ugric	Lutheran	Northern and Northeastern Europe	German Danish Swedish Finnish
Latvia	1918	Baltic			German Swedish
Lithuania	13 <sup>th</sup> century		Roman catholic	Central Europe <sup>217</sup>	Polish

**Table 7: Historical and Cultural Diversity of the Baltic States<sup>218</sup>**

Paulauskas argues that in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the term itself is partly associated with the historical experience of Soviet rule and that this is the reason why it often has a fairly negative connotation among the respective societies. Hence, from time to time, the expression has been regarded by the Balts as an attempt of marginalizing and easternizing them in both a geo-political and an ideological sense.<sup>219</sup> In contrast thereto, others claim that during the Soviet era, it even evoked some sort of pride among some Balts of being labelled as ‘Baltic’ (Russ. *Pribaltika*) since that was implicitly related to the notion of being ‘western’, or at least, different from the rest of the Soviet Empire. In fact, after gaining independence, it was also very popular and common for the three states to openly label themselves as ‘Baltic States’.<sup>220</sup> To some extent, this even seemed to be part of their transition strategy. In fact, right after they had gained their independence, they signed a large number of agreements for mutual co-operation.<sup>221</sup> In 1990, they founded the highly emblematic Baltic Assembly (BA), and in 1994, the Baltic Council of Ministers (BCM) in order to promote intra-Baltic cooperation. One could also argue that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania did show some sort of ‘Baltic unity’ when it came to prepare their accession to NATO and EU.

In the post-Cold War period, the Baltic States have had much to gain by adopting a positive attitude to regional cooperation, not least because it has been seen as enhancing their prospects of EU and NATO membership. In a sense, regional cooperation in the North

217 Lang identified the distinct Lithuanian affiliation to Central Europe and the West as some sort of geo-strategic long-term pattern based on the Lithuanian post World War I fear of East Central Europe being split into a German and a Russian sphere. Alluding to the 1922 German-Russian Treaty of Rapallo he called it the Lithuanian “Rapallo-complex”. See LANG Kai-Olaf: Die Neuen in der GASP. Störenfriede oder Ideengeber? In: Osteuropa, No. 5-6, pp. 443-458, here p. 445.

218 Table based on PAULAUSKAS Kęstutis: The Baltics. From Nation States to Member States. European Institute for Security Studies (EU-ISS), Occasional Papers, No. 62. Paris 2006, p. 21.

219 See LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 69.

220 See comment by MOLIS Arūnas, Head of the Eastern Countries Monitoring Division at the Centre for Strategic Studies/*Strateginių studijų centras*, Vilnius (LT). Unpublished personal correspondence. November 2006.

221 See OZOLINA Zaneta: The Impact of the European Union on Baltic Co-operation. Riga 1999, p. 7.

could be conceptualised as having been something of a training ground where they could prove they were responsible international citizens worthy of EU and NATO membership.<sup>222</sup>

According to Paulauskas, they had two good reasons to do this despite their dislike of the 'Baltic' unity imposed by their Western partners (i.e. NATO and EU member states), just as by the Soviet rule in the decades before:

- to give proof of their socio-economic maturity and show their willingness to strive for continuous Europeanization and progressive integration;
- to counter the doubts about their 'defensibility' and to present themselves as dignified future Western countries.

However, this approach of pooling their interests through the label of global 'Balticness' on the European scene has never really complied with each country's self-perception. When looking at the three 'Baltic' perspectives more closely, it becomes clear that their sense of diversity has "re-emerged" at some point during the political transition process. Medijainen argues that the deconstruction of the Baltic image first started in the late 1990s.<sup>223</sup>

It seems that these countries [note: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania] are returning to the pattern of the 1920s and the 1930s, when they were able to co-operate only to a very limited extent, something which contributed to the weakness of their resistance to Germany and the Soviet Union. This observation was confirmed at a meeting between the Baltic prime ministers in September 1992 when no specific results could be achieved. On the contrary, a certain rivalry between these states could be observed concerning the policies towards Russia. These problems have by no means ceased to exist.<sup>224</sup>

The gradual diversification among the Baltic group was generally reflected in the three countries' relations with Russia. Estonia and Latvia, for example, were roughly disdained for their migration policy that was said to affect the legal status of the Russian-speaking minority living in either of the two countries.<sup>225</sup> Lithuania, on the other hand, succeeded in retaining good relations with the Russian Federation. In the EU context, this specific relationship enabled Lithuania to portray itself as a potential negotiating partner for the West in dealings with Russia and Belarus.<sup>226</sup>

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222 BROWNING Christopher S.: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): *Remaking Europe in the Margins*. Northern Europe after the Enlargements. Aldershot 2005, pp. 1-10, here p. 3.

223 See MEDIJAINEN Eero: *The Baltic Question in the Twentieth Century*. *Historiographic Aspects*. In: AMELANG James S./BEER Siegfried (eds): *Public Power in Europe*. *Studies in Historical Transformations*. Pisa 2006, pp. 109-124, here p. 114.

224 See DELLENBRANT Jan Åke: *The Baltic Sea Co-operation*. *Visions and Realities*. In: BALDERSHEIM Harald/STÅHLBERG Krister (eds): *Nordic Region-Building in a European Perspective*. Aldershot 1999, pp. 83-97, here p. 94.

225 The question of compatriots in the former Soviet Republics emerged already in the early 1990s. From Moscow's perspective, Russia has still a legal responsibility to look after the interests of all Russians within the former Soviet Union. In the course of the 1990s the issue received considerable publicity even though the legal position of Russian-speaking people living in the Central Asian Republics had always been much more contested. See LEHTI Marko: *Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era*. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): *Wider Europe*. *Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe*. Danish Institute for International Studies. Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 77-78.

226 See CAVE Andrew: *Finding a Role in an Enlarged EU*. In: *Central Europe Review*, Nr. 20/2000. Online publication [www.ce-review.org](http://www.ce-review.org) [26 November 2007].

In the course of the 1990s, the three states have largely taken different developments, with each having a different regional partner for the course of their transatlantic and European integration process: for Lithuania it was Poland, for Latvia – Sweden, and for Estonia, it was Finland.<sup>227</sup> In the last stages of the accession process to both NATO and the EU, the three neighbours also started to point out their individual qualities, with e.g. Lithuania claiming its comparative advantage in defence matters, and Estonia alleged stressing its economic pre-eminence.<sup>228</sup>

In terms of their regional orientation towards their regional surrounding, the three countries underwent a similar development. After a first phase of apparent unity right after they had gained independence, each of the three started to diversify its political position towards the regional neighbourhood. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, then Estonian minister for foreign affairs, delivered some of the most striking public statements in this context. He repeatedly claimed that his country should no longer be considered as part of the ‘Baltic group’ but rather be allocated to the sphere of ‘Nordic’ culture and identity. He also fought against the common assumption that there existed something like a ‘Baltic entity’ that could be treated as a culturally and politically homogenous collective.

I think it is time to do away with poorly fitting, externally imposed categories. It is time that we recognise that we are dealing with three very different countries in the Baltic area, with completely different affinities. There is no Baltic identity with a common culture, language group, religious tradition. [...] What the three Baltic States have in common derives almost entirely from shared unhappy experiences imposed upon them from outside: occupations, deportations, annexation, sovietization, collectivization, russification. What these countries do *not* share is a common identity.<sup>229</sup>

Since the end of the 1990s, Estonia has been actively trying to reinvent its own position in the region and in Europe by recasting itself as one of the Nordic Countries.<sup>230</sup> The most obvious reason behind this proactive Estonian attitude lay in the fact that the association with the other two Baltic countries was largely seen as a ballast impeding Estonia’s Western integration.<sup>231</sup> Lehti claims that during Ilves’ second period as foreign minister (1999-2002), this specific policy of ‘Nordicisation’ reached its

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227 See HUDALLA Anneke/PRADETTO August: *Desintegration durch Integration? Dilemmata der Osterweiterung der Europäischen Union und die Europapolitik der neuen Bundesregierung*. In: *Institut für Internationale Politik/Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg* (ed.): *Studien zur Internationalen Politik*. Heft 2/1999. Hamburg 1999, p. 26.

228 See comment by MOLIS Arūnas, Head of the Eastern Countries Monitoring Division at the Centre for Strategic Studies/*Strateginių studijų centras*, Vilnius (LT). Unpublished personal correspondence. November 2006.

229 ILVES Toomas Hendrik: “Estonia as a Nordic country”, speech given at the Swedish Institute of Foreign Affairs, 14 December 1999. Official Website of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [www.vm.ee](http://www.vm.ee) [25 November 2007].

230 By placing Estonia into the category of the Nordic sphere, some political leaders aimed to ensure a comparative edge for their country, or even to achieve advanced admittance to the EU. See CAVE Andrew: *Finding a Role in an Enlarged EU*. In: *Central Europe Review*, Nr. 20/2000. Online publication [www.ce-review.org](http://www.ce-review.org) [26 November 2007].

231 See LAGERSPETZ Mikko: *How Many Nordic Countries? Possibilities and Limits of Geopolitical Identity Construction*. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 1/2003, pp. 49-61, here p. 53.

culmination.<sup>232</sup> Some analysts support the claim that there are aspects that link Estonia more to Northern Europe, or at least, that make it different from the 'other two' Baltics.

Estonian society is more akin to societies in the Northern states such as Sweden and Finland than to the Catholic persuasions of Lithuania. Its economy is more liberal and technologically advanced than that of any other Baltic state, and corruption in Estonia is lower than in some existing member states.<sup>233</sup>

Lithuania, on the other hand, has made considerable effort to position itself on the other, Catholic and Central European side, particularly emphasizing its historical and ideological links to Poland, and the other Visegrád countries.<sup>234</sup> This ideological process of Baltic diversification has passed various phases: right after their independence, the three chose to rally behind the Baltic label as it helped them to distance from the Soviet past. In the course of the 1990s, however, the desire to stand out as individual nation states grew stronger, and eventually reached its height between 1999 and 2002, before it perked up again in the wake of enlargement.

After 9/11, the Balts have taken a more active role. They [were] no longer automatically accepting external labels as such and instead increasingly defined themselves as something special. Such a move can provide the Balts with increased discursive power in order for them to contribute to the European configuration and in particular to the notion of the EU's Eastern border.<sup>235</sup>

As for today, it may generally be assumed that the three countries do definitely prefer to be treated individually rather than in the context of a "Baltic pot".<sup>236</sup> As Ozolina claimed at an earlier stage of the process, the Baltic States might have started to emphasise their differences at some point. However, whether and to what extent they accepted the rationale of Baltic unity or not, the stereotype remained and was eventually reinforced in the enlargement context, with the three of them being simultaneously "redrawn" into Europe.<sup>237</sup>

This is all not to say that the background of Baltic togetherness is all about externally imposed unity or mere strategic calculation from Estonia's, Latvia's or Lithuania's side. It should not be neglected that in fact, their efforts taken on the long road towards full integration and more generally, in the course of their Post Soviet transition did produce some sort of common historical experience that tightened the link between them and

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232 See LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 73. In September 2006, Toomas Hendrik Ilves was elected President of the Republic of Estonia.

233 CAVE Andrew: Finding a Role in an Enlarged EU. In: Central Europe Review, Nr. 20/2000. Online publication [www.ce-review.org](http://www.ce-review.org) [26 November 2007].

234 Ibid.

235 LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 70.

236 See comment by MOLIS Arūnas, Head of the Eastern Countries Monitoring Division at the Centre for Strategic Studies/*Strateginių studijų centras*, Vilnius (LT). Unpublished personal correspondence. November 2006.

237 See OZOLINA Zaneta: The Impact of the EU on Baltic Cooperation. Riga 1999, p. 7-9.

produced a certain 'we' feeling. What is Baltic unity about and to what extent does its quality and substance matter in the context of Baltic Sea Regionalism? It seems as if the answer to these questions has to remain uncertain and largely ambiguous.

The political transformation has been considerably fuelled by the immediate post Soviet reaction of the Baltic States, whose first and foremost aim it was to get rid of past dependencies, by whatever means. In this situation, sub-regional cooperation offered a good opportunity to anticipatedly (re-)enter the European sphere, make inroads to the West and thus, to distance from Russia. As Ozolina argued, the unity of the Baltic States has always been more dependent on external factors than on internal need.

The more threatened the Baltic Republics were in their efforts for sovereignty while they were still in the USSR, the more unified were their activities and the more powerful was their understanding of self-identity.<sup>238</sup>

The same certainly applies to their joint strive for sub-regional integration as some sort of pre-stage to anticipate their full EU membership. This is not to say that the three Baltic States featured identical geo-strategic orientations in this context. Estonia and Latvia certainly felt closer associated with their northern Baltic Sea neighbours than e.g. Lithuania did. Especially in regard to their geo-political long-term prospects, they were certainly not strictly striving northwards as a homogenous group of three. However, in the first years of their national independence, Baltic Sea Regionalism offered a very good opportunity for them to consolidate their 'Europeanness', and eventually, prepare for their accession to the EU. In fact, in the eve of EU-accession, the concept of a 'Nordic Europe' was a very popular idea among the aspiring candidate countries.

### *3. Nordic-Baltic Co-operation*

Baltic Sea Cooperation is a manifold and complex phenomenon. Integration between the Baltic Sea littoral states takes place at various levels of action, and thus, includes both official and non-official actors. The most obvious link that has been installed between the two subspaces, the Nordic and the Baltic sphere, is "Nordic-Baltic Cooperation." This intraregional format has traditionally been referred to as the "5+3-Cooperation." In summer 2000, at the Conference of the Baltic Sea Foreign Ministers in Middelfart/Denmark, another more illustrative term was introduced to denominate this formation, the "Nordic-Baltic-Eight" (NB8).<sup>239</sup> Cooperation in the NB8 format is primarily conducted in the form of annual meetings of the Baltic Sea Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, and Cooperation Ministers. However, also representatives from other departments, secretary-generals and political directors meet on a regular basis.

The origins of the NB8 date back to a meeting of the Nordic Ministers for Cooperation held on 31 January 1990, where Sweden initiated a proposal under 'other business' worded as follows: "It was agreed to investigate the possibilities of establishing Nordic Information- and Culture Centres in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania." The greatest restriction on the scope of activities at that time was that the three Baltic countries were still part of the Soviet Union. After verbose negotiations with Moscow, the first step could be taken: in April 1991, a Nordic Information Office was launched in the Latvian Capital of Riga.

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>239</sup> Press Release 31/08/2000, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [www.vm.ee](http://www.vm.ee) [5 December 2007].

In 1992, the '5+3' meetings started on the prime ministerial level. The Prime Ministers now meet annually to discuss common foreign policy and regional issues. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs meet annually since 1993, the Ministers of Defence since 1994, and the Ministers for Regional Cooperation (Baltic States are represented by Ministers of Foreign Affairs) since 1996. Cooperation according to formula 5+3 also got a new impetus through frequent consultations on the level of Political Directors. Ad hoc meetings with the participation of one guest country are also common. On important example was the presence of the EU High Commissioner Javier Solana at the above-mentioned meeting in Middelfart/Denmark in summer 2000. At the given meeting Ministers have come to a consensus that forthcoming meetings are to be called Nordic Baltic 8. The NB8 cooperation system heavily relies on the coordination between the Nordic Council of Ministers, on the one hand, and the Baltic Council of Ministers, on the other. Since 2005, the NB8 also engages in the development of support programmes for the Russian and Belarus NGOs in the BSR in order to further strengthen the civic society development and democracy in the region.<sup>240</sup>

## II. *The 'Nordic Bloc' – Driving Core for Baltic Sea Regionalism?*

Given their experiences in the context of Nordic Cooperation, the Nordic States have a certain tradition in the field of cooperation across borders. This might lead to the assumption that Nordic Cooperation could have provided for some sort of "driving core" or "source of inspiration" for Baltic Sea Regionalism after 1989.<sup>241</sup> Indeed, over the years, the Nordic States have established a tight network of cooperation on both state and non-state level. Networking between nongovernmental actors, including organised interest groups and political parties as well as daily informal contacts among civil servants have always been a significant basis of the Nordic Cooperation.<sup>242</sup> Intra-Nordic collaboration and togetherness is a structural phenomenon that has not only shaped the external policies of the respective states, it has also led to the generation of a certain Nordic image in international politics.<sup>243</sup>

'Nordic-ness' or 'Nordicity' was, and still is, often seen as some sort of third way, as a political choice in itself, materialised in the institutional framework of Nordic Cooperation. The 'Nordic Model' is still widely perceived to embody a set of morally superior political visions, e.g. the pre-eminence of the welfare-state model, a strict approach to democracy and human rights, strong socio-democratic traditions, all adding up with the substance of shared historical heritage as well as a common cultural and ideological background.<sup>244</sup> For many Nordic officials, even today, 'Nordic togetherness'

240 See PABRIKS Artis/UNCKEL Per: The Baltic Sea Region - the Most Stable and Dynamic. Statement by the Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary General of the Nordic Council, 6 November 2006. Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. . [www.mfa.gov.lv/en](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en) [8 December 2007].

241 See BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Cooperation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 27.

242 See SUNDELIUS Bengt/WIKLUND Claes: *Nordisk samverkan vid femtio. Visst finns det en framtid!* In: Idd. (ed.): *Norden i sicksack. Tre spårbyten inom nordiskt samarbete*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 325-350, here p. 327.

243 See SUNDBERG Jan: *Partier og interessorganisationer i Norden*. Copenhagen 2001, p. 3.

244 For more details about issues like Nordic superiority and exclusiveness, see chapter "Old North vs. New Regionalism. Visions Competing for the Same Space?", p. 76-.



is a beloved and viable concept. Thus, they try to promote the vision behind it and to keep it a present issue on the European level and more generally, within the outside perspective on the North. One of the more recent examples was Henrik Lax, the candidate of the Swedish People's Party (*svenska folkpartiet*) for the Finnish presidential elections in 2006, arguing that

[Our] Nordic ties constitute a unique asset that enables [us] to build bridges to the Baltic countries and to Russia, which would increase the prospects for a prosperous Baltic Europe.<sup>245</sup>

However, as argued before, the quality and substance of Nordic togetherness has changed over time. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Nordic Cooperation has passed different stages of institutionalisation and consolidation. The external conditions have always played a decisive role for the overall development of intra-Nordic cooperation. This applies particularly to the impact of the EU integration process, with the 1995 and the 2004 EU enlargements building two of the most important geo-political changes in the Northern European constellation. These changes have certainly led to a gradual diversification of activities and to the adaptation of formerly common positions. Studies have shown, for instance, that Sweden and Finland, once they had joined the EU, started to adapt their voting behaviour within the UN to the European mainstream.<sup>246</sup>

Only in questions where there was no EU consensus a distinctive stance among Nordic countries could be established, e.g. concerning the reform of the UN Security Council.<sup>247</sup>

Intra-Nordic Coordination in the UN framework has once been the cornerstone of Nordic Cooperation.<sup>248</sup> However, Nordic Cooperation has certainly lost in substance. Hence, also the integrative impact of Nordicism should not be overestimated, in neither the EU context nor concerning Baltic Sea Regionalism.

A closer look at the development of Baltic Sea Regionalism or integration shows that the Nordic Countries, most notably Sweden and Finland, pursued rather different regional strategies.<sup>249</sup> As for the quality and significance of Nordic unity and togetherness, the post Cold War setting constituted an enormous challenge. The political changes of 1989/90 revolutionised the circumstances for foreign policy of most states in Europe. For the Nordic States, the new geopolitical constellation did not only involve the medium-term integration into the European project; the Nordic Countries also had to incorporate into newly arising spatial concepts, such as the 'New North' or the new 'Baltic Sea Region'. The post Cold War situation was quite ambivalent for the Nordic countries. On the one hand, they were offered a new variety of regional policy options

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245 LAX Henrik: Vision, courage, tolerance. For a better Finland. Election manifesto 2006. Personal website of Henrik Lax [www.henrik lax.nu](http://www.henrik lax.nu) [24 November 2007].

246 For more details, see WIKLUND Lena: *Nordisk samling i FN*. In: SUNDELIUS Bengt/WIKLUND Claes (eds): *Norden I sicksack. Tre spårbyten inom nordiskt samarbete*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 253-274.

247 BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Cooperation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here pp. 26-27.

248 See WIKLUND Lena: *Nordisk samling i FN*. In: SUNDELIUS Bengt/WIKLUND Claes (eds): *Norden i sicksack. Tre spårbyten inom nordiskt samarbete*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 253-274, here p. 281.

249 This will be addressed in chapter "Excursus: Mare Europaeum – Whose Mare Nostrum?", p. 111-.

that allowed for a geo-strategic reorientation. On the other hand, now they were also forced to take major strategic decisions while the bipolar structure had never asked for any geo-political creativity.<sup>250</sup>

Every now and then the Nordic countries might feel a certain nostalgia for the good old days of the Cold War, when national strategy was a stable and predictable phenomenon. United in what became known as the 'Nordic Balance', a strategic concept of their own design but resulting from the bipolar division of the international system, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland, and Denmark formed something of a regional quilt of complementary strategic choices.<sup>251</sup>

During the phase of global block confrontation, the Nordic 'third way' had justified the reluctant position of "surveying the international arena from a distance with a certain air of superiority."<sup>252</sup> However, the geopolitical changes after 1989 considerably challenged the viability and credibility of this traditional Nordic attitude.

Distance now meant: away from the centre of the new dynamism. The future lay with integration, participation, involvement – not neutrality and non-engagement. The future was in Europe, *Norden* just backward and reluctant.<sup>253</sup>

The Nordics had to re-orient themselves on the map of the 'New Europe'. In this context, it was most of all Sweden that was pulled into a strong coil of geopolitical identity crisis. While Finland tried to capitalise politically on its newly gained independence by strongly aspiring towards Western European integration, not least in order to create distance to past ideological and political dependencies from (then Soviet) Russia.<sup>254</sup> Due to its traditional transatlantic ties, Norway pursued a very clear post Cold War strategy in geopolitics. Regionally, it focussed more on the Barents and Arctic dimension, while globally, it was more given to the tendencies of general internationalisation and globalisation than to institutional integration, e.g. in the framework of the EU or (sub)regional cooperation initiatives.<sup>255</sup> Taking these considerations together, there appears to be reason enough to question the ability of the Nordic 'core' to enhance or stimulate further (sub)regional integration. In the post Cold War setting, the Nordic group rather strived towards foreign policy individualisation

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250 See MOURITZEN Hans: The Nordic Reactions to the Soviet Coup and Disintegration 1991. Testing Weak Power Theory. Centre for Peace and Conflict Research (ed.): Working Paper, 13/1992. Copenhagen 1992, p. 2.

251 DAHL Ann-Sofie: To Be or Not to Be Neutral. Swedish Security Strategy on the Post Cold War Era. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): The National Security of Small States in a Changing World. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 175.

252 See TASSINARI Fabrizio: Mare Europaeum. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe. Copenhagen 2004, p. 117.

253 WÆVER Ole: Balts, Books and Brussels. Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) Working Papers, No. 11. Copenhagen 1994, p. 4.

254 See DAHL Ann-Sofie: To Be or Not to Be Neutral. Swedish Security Strategy on the Post Cold War Era. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): The National Security of Small States in a Changing World. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 176.

255 See TUNANDER Ola: Norway's Post Cold War Security. The Nordic Region Between Friend and Foe, or between Cosmos and Chaos. In: ORRENIUS Anders/TRUEDSON Lars (eds): Visions of European Security. Focal Point Sweden and Northern Europe. Stockholm 1996, pp. 48-63, here p. 50.

with each of the five applying different strategies in order to avoid geopolitical marginalisation.<sup>256</sup>

### III. 'Old North' vs. 'New Regionalism' – Competing for the Same Space?

The post-Cold War boom of cooperative regionalism in the BSR has often been referred to as the rise of the 'New North', or the dawn of 'New Regionalism'. In fact, the epochal events of the late 1990s have not only changed the political and geo-strategic framework of Northern European affairs, they have also altered the nature of what is generally perceived to account for 'Northern Europe' and the 'North'. Up until the late 1980s, the notion of a 'Nordic sphere' was a very strong marker in terms of mental geography.

Until the breakdown of the Communist block the model of the Nordic welfare state represented a third way between the two dominant superpowers and their attendant ideologies.<sup>257</sup>

During the Cold War, the Nordic block actually constituted a clearly delimitable entity whose politico-strategic substance was hardly ever questioned from the bi-polarised outside world. Nordic unity had largely been fostered by relative isolation in both the political and the geographical sense.<sup>258</sup> The Nordic States are, as Joenniemi put it, "not to be held responsible for the emergence and success of *Norden*."<sup>259</sup> The Cold War setting had been ideal in the sense that the notion of this "third way" justified a certain reluctance towards the "embattled international arena".<sup>260</sup> However, in the course of post-Soviet transition, the well-established image of a 'Nordic North' happened to be considerably challenged.

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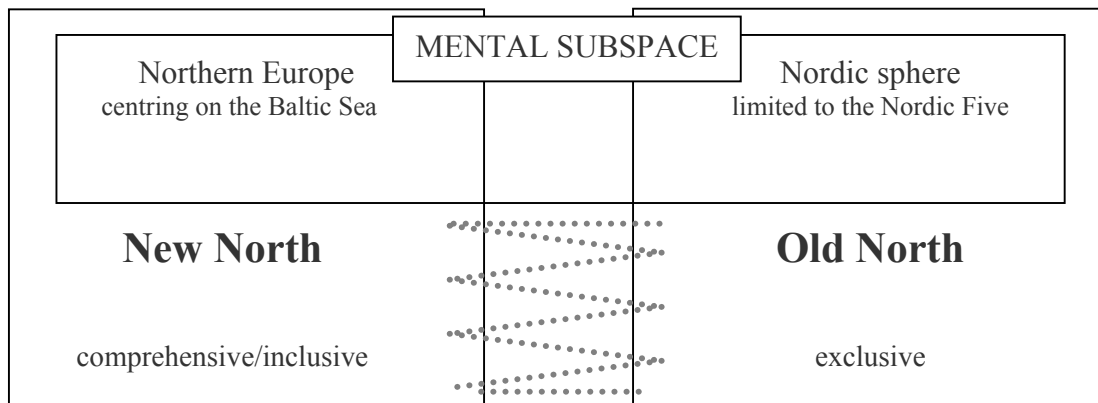
256 See VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international. En antologi om Stockholm i en regionaliserad och globaliserad värld*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 24. For a Swedish-Finnish comparison in this respect, see chapter "Excursus: Mare Europaeum – Whose Mare Nostrum?", p. 111-.

257 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Nordic Countries in the Baltic Region. In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp 26-53, here p. 28.

258 See JAANSON Kaido: The Baltic States and Norden. In: *The Baltic Review*, Vol. 19. Online Edition. Website of the Journal 'The Baltic Review' [www.tbr.ee](http://www.tbr.ee) [12 August 2007].

259 JOENNIEMI Pertti: Norden as a Post-Nationalist Construction. In: Id. (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 181-234, here p. 214.

260 See TASSINARI Fabrizio: *Mare Europaeum. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe*. Copenhagen 2004, p. 117.



*Figure 4: Mental Sub-Spaces in the European North*

There emerges a ‘new Northernness’, facing both east and south and expanding from its previous territorial boundaries. The new ‘North’ is not purely of European, Russian or Baltic influence, but instead should be viewed as a complex geographical mixture of all these spatial elements, stirred together with a touch of spice (i.e. the former Nordic legacy) for added piquancy. [...] In general it appears to be the case that little demand remains for what we can label as Cold War ‘Nordicity’.<sup>261</sup>

The newly emerging and comprehensive ‘North’ that, at first, cropped up in the form of progressive Baltic Sea Regionalism directly interfered with the traditional Nordic formation. Joenniemi and Lehti called it the “clash between Nordism and Baltism”<sup>262</sup> or the “encounter of old Nordicity with new Northernness”, i.e. of two regional formations that “coin a rather different ‘we’-feeling but” however, are not strictly opposite.<sup>263</sup>

The wave of cooperative ‘Baltic Sea’ ventures that emerged after the end of the Cold War for the first time seemed to open the compact system of Nordic political and ideological insularity.<sup>264</sup> The newly gained independence of the three Baltic States enabled them to strive for regional and sub-regional integration, aspirations that were naturally focussed on the near neighbourhood, i.e. the Northern and Western Baltic Rim. As from the Nordic perspective, this process of regional re-orientation of the

261 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 364.

262 WÆVER Ole: From Nordism to Baltism. In: JERVELL Sverre/KUKK Mare/JOENNIEMI Pertti (eds): The Baltic Sea Area. A Region in the Making. Oslo 1992.

263 JOENNIEMI Pertti/LEHTI Marko: On the encounter between the Nordic and the Northern. Torn Apart but Meeting Again? Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI): Working Paper, 11/2001, p. 6.

264 The “EC membership factor” first entered the Nordic scene in 1973, when Denmark chose to become a full EC-member. Thorough observations of the development of Nordic Cooperation have shown that Danish membership has not had any remarkable impact on the “Nordic Club”. This is mainly because Denmark had never been reluctant to emphasize its Nordic links. Denmark’s dual affiliation was widely accepted by the other EC partners as well as by its Nordic fellow countries. For a critical discussion on this aspect see LAURSEN Johnny N./OLESEN Thorsten B.: A Nordic Alternative to Europe? The Interdependence of Denmark’s Nordic and European policies, 1945–1998. In: Contemporary European History 9/2000, pp. 59-92.

Baltic States added a new 'Eastern' dimension to 'Nordicity'/'Nordicness' and thus, potentially challenged this traditional regionalist formation. By way of this development, *Norden* got literally 'balticised' and as a result, 'Nordic Cooperation' itself had to face up to the political and mental impact of New 'Baltic Cooperation'. In the course of the 1990s, the Baltic Sea became the major point of reference for regionalism in Northern Europe. Thus, the Northern European centre of gravity had shifted southwards, and thereby actually away from the Nordic *Norden*.

The Nordic formation itself never had a core or centre in terms of a positive and explicit geographical reference. As Østergård points out, the Nordic group has rather defined itself alongside a negative pattern, in the sense of being distinct from the "southern rest", and thus, clearly "non-European, non-Catholic, anti-Rome, anti-imperialist, non-colonial, non-exploitative, peaceful, small and social democratic."<sup>265</sup> Stråth found a similar way to put it, claiming that the democratic, Protestant and egalitarian *Norden* traditionally functioned as a demarcation from Catholic, conservative and capitalistic Europe.<sup>266</sup> While Nordic togetherness had always been based on the logic of being different and of distancing oneself from an ideologically remote and different 'other', Baltic Sea Regionalism now claimed for a border-crossing and to some extent pan-European togetherness, that does not act on the ground of exclusion but rather on the ground of inclusion and comprehensive 'Northernness'.

Thus, when in the course of the 1990s Nordic *Norden* gained a Baltic dimension, it was not equally welcomed on both sides of the Baltic Sea. The events that caused so much enthusiasm in Northern Europe, and particularly in the countries of the former Soviet bloc, were treated by the North with much more scepticism. The Northern part of the New Europe, previously characterized by the low military pressure, moral superiority and socio-economic particularity (the so called 'third way') was about to lose its unique status.

In spite of the 'absence' of the European Communities in Northern Europe, a turning point was reached after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Unlike to the Scandinavian states, EU membership could not be granted to the Baltic States in transition, but processes of regional integration and co-operation have arisen in the Baltic Sea region, even before their independence, to create a kind a Baltic identity.<sup>267</sup>

For the Baltic States, the newly emerging opportunity for regional and most importantly, westbound integration offered a good way to distance themselves from the unloved East and to aspire towards Europeaness, or at least, virtual Northernness.

In the first years of independence, the abilities of the Baltic States to implement foreign and security policies were fairly limited. [...] For that reason, the first partners in the international environment were found among each country's neighbours, and the initial operations of the Baltic States in terms of launching joint projects was a reaction to the fact that international communications channels at that time were somewhat limited.<sup>268</sup>

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265 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: *The Geopolitics of Nordic Identity from Composite States to Nation-States*. Copenhagen 1997, p. 1.

266 STRÅTH Bo: *Nordiska Rådet och nordiskt samarbete*. In: *Den jyske Historiker*, Nr. 69-70/1994, pp. 201-229, here p. 208.

267 DUBOIS Jeroen: *The Northern Dimension as Prototype of the Wider Europe Framework Policy*. University of Liverpool, Working Paper. Liverpool 2004, p. 2.

268 OZOLINA Zaneta: *The Impact of the European Union on Baltic Co-operation*. Riga 1999, p. 1.

For the Baltic States, this idea of becoming part of the Northern sphere, of shifting 'northwards' on the mental map of Europe, was less an end in itself than a means to get rid of the ideological dependencies and burdens of the past. For the Northwestern Baltic, i.e. the old Nordic group, in contrast, the idea of Northernness was not to be subjected to any sort of Easternization whatsoever. The Nordic perspective on Baltic Sea Regionalism largely differed from the Baltic point of view.

Whilst the Balts felt uncomfortable with the Baltic label, the Western Baltics – Sweden, Danes and northern Germans – defined their 'Balticness' in a very different manner compared to the other side of the Baltic Sea. This is so as the Western Baltic understanding concentrates on focussing on the whole Baltic Sea area [...].<sup>269</sup>

Thus, New Baltic Regionalism generally founded on very different understandings on either sides of what this 'new region' should be about and on what premises it should be constructed. It could be seen as some sort of 'battlefield' where different and partly diverging interpretations about the essence of single regionalist initiatives virtually collided but still managed to uphold the cohesive image of inclusiveness.<sup>270</sup> Lehti has a point when emphasising that despite the Baltic enthusiastic visions and their struggle to become a perceived part of the North, the 'Nordic core' has always remained exclusive.

In the 1990s it seemed that the North and 'Northernness' would constitute something new and receive new political importance whereas the old *Norden* would lose its exclusiveness. *Norden* has, however, remained resilient and even if it has opened up eastwards, the Nordic core has remained exclusive.<sup>271</sup>

In fact, the links between the southeastern and the northwestern Baltic have measurably tightened, but still, as from a Nordic point of view the Baltic States continue to be considered as partners instead of Nordic fellows. One important reason for Nordicness to remain exclusive in ideological terms probably lies in the fact that the construct of a 'New North' or comprehensive 'Baltic North' did not imply any sort of structural and normative similarity between its constituents, meaning democratic traditions or socio-economic characteristics.

The present common identity of people in the Nordic countries is based not only on an awareness of cultural and historical commonalities, but also on several concrete characteristics of their present-day societies that are distinctive of the region in international comparison (i.e. legal and administrative traditions including municipal self-determination, rule of law, gender equality and a social democratic tradition).<sup>272</sup>

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269 LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 73.

270 See WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. The Genesis of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a historical case study. In: NORDEUROPA Forum 1/2005, pp. 3-20, here p. 5.

271 See LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 73.

272 LAGERSPETZ Mikko: How Many Nordic Countries? Possibilities and Limits of Geopolitical Identity Construction. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 1/2003, pp. 49-61, here p. 55.

Considering the functionalist and pragmatic foundation that inclusive Baltic Sea Regionalism was built upon, these newly emerging spatial visions could actually not be seen as a true competitor of the traditional Nordic system of cooperation. The new regional formations did no longer invoke any common model of society or a societal sense of belonging together; this very characteristic could be seen as both a blessing and a curse. The ideological openness and inclusiveness of the new regionalism enabled the newly emerging networks to span across old dividing lines. On the other hand, this ‘open frame’ approach also proved to be rather weak and superficial in the sense that old established ‘mental spaces’ were not sufficiently challenged. There was no pressure or incentive for traditional formations like the Nordic system of cooperation to uncloset for new ideological or political inspirations coming from the outside, or rather, from the East. The Nordic core proved to be consistent enough to leave these influences outside. Lagerspetz tried to identify the basis and consistency of inclusive Balticness in the sense that the traditional Nordic system could be opening up for new inspirations, and in a next step, for new Nordic fellows. He assessed the three Baltic States’ potential to qualify for such an ‘enlarging’ Nordicness, coming to the general conclusion that the cohesive substance of such a spatial construction remains low.

	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>
Geographical location	+	+	(+)
Historical ties	+	+	-
Linguistic affinity	(+)	-	-
Lutheran faith	(+)	-	-
Social development (the Nordic Model)	-	-	-
Nordic cooperative organs	(+)	(+)	(+)
Legal and administrative tradition	(+)	(+)	?
Gender equality	-	-	-

**Table 8: Assessing the Nordic Potential of the Baltic States<sup>273</sup>**

Nordic uniqueness as a notion traditionally associated to the longstanding continuity in the five countries’ foreign policy making and thinking, as well as to the immanent nexus between the state and society has often been said to be based on a “societal but largely illusory proximity.”<sup>274</sup> However, whether one is willing to question the normative grounds of Nordicness or not, in the Baltic Sea discourse it has proved to be a strong and lasting marker. As pointed out above, the global changes following the end of the Cold War did have remarkable repercussions on Nordicness and the substance of Nordic

273 Table generated on the basis of LAGERSPETZ Mikko: How Many Nordic Countries? Possibilities and Limits of Geopolitical Identity Construction. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 1/2003, pp. 49-61, here p. 57. Obvious elements of conformity are indicated by ‘+’, relative conformities by ‘(+)’ and ‘?’ marks relationships where the conformity is not clear.

274 Simoulin claimed this heritage to be illusory because it “basically meant that each Nordic country shared with one or two others a social feature, but that it was closer to others for other particular features. See SIMOULIN Vincent: The State of Nordic Cooperation in a Changing Europe. Toulouse 2000, pp. 3-4.

togetherness in both the regional and the broader European context, since each of the five states appeared to pursue a different strategy for managing the global systemic changes. Most interestingly, this impact rather concerned the inside-out dimension of Nordicness, meaning that the internal coherence and togetherness of the Nordic system lost in substance. As for the outside-in dimension, the Nordic system has largely remained impervious and compact.

The alleged “superiority of Nordic *Norden*”<sup>275</sup> has also been present in the intra-Nordic dialogue about Baltic Sea Regionalism; it was noticeable in the way the Nordic countries addressed their newly independent neighbours in political discourse. Browning has a point when noting that “the political discourse about and in favour of the so-called New North” widely founded on the “missionary narratives of Western identity.”

Post Cold War region-building in the European North is frequently depicted highly positively as representative of a new, original, post-modern and humanistic approach to regional cooperation. Central to such notions has been the idea that all participants, but particularly Russia, in the regional partnership can be treated as equals in a mutually beneficial dialogue. [...] The key thing to note here is that in many discourses this is not simply the New North we are talking about, but *Europe's* [original emphasis] New North and the prefix of Europe is important because in Western discourse Europe is a highly loaded term. [...] Only those ‘like us’ will receive this northern passport into the European Club. Those not like us will remain outside to remind us who we are.<sup>276</sup>

The Nordic five obviously perceived themselves (and still do) to be the ‘more European’ North, the North that could potentially bring some more Europeanness to the Easterners. The intra-Nordic discourse about new forms of regionalism across the whole Baltic area was generally strongly exclusive to the extent that they appealed to a Nordicisation of the ‘un-Nordic rest’ instead of the creation of a new inclusive concept. Even this aim of ‘nordicising’ the BSR did not imply any inclusive togetherness of the Nordic Baltic and what could be called the ‘Baltic Baltic.’ By avoiding any sort of Easternisation, Nordicness has been kept exclusive and as for the BSR context superior. It appears that some Nordic state actors have recognized the potential of Regionalism as a means to “keep the Nordic profile alive”.<sup>277</sup>

The idea of trying to keep the Nordic profile alive also seems to be reflected in the Nordic countries’ self-perception, and equally, their way of presenting themselves as actors and partners on the international scene. In fact, the notion of Nordic uniqueness is still a very common argument; many Nordic officials try to employ the old clichés of the ‘third way’ in order to position their country’s attitude on the mental map of Europe. Among the Nordic countries, it is still very common to appeal to their own alleged weakness and the resulting unobtrusiveness, to the notion of being “small, peace-loving

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275 See WÆVER Ole: *Balts, Books and Brussels*. Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) Working Papers, No. 11. Copenhagen 1994, p. 3.

276 BROWNING Christopher S.: *The Region-Building Approach Revisited: The Continued Othering of Russia in Discourses of Region-Building in the European North*. In: *Geopolitics*, No. 1/2003, pp. 45-71, here p. 69.

277 See WÆVER Ole: *The Baltic Sea: A Region after Post-Modernity?* In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality. The Restructuring of political space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 293-342, here p. 324.



and democratic countries.”<sup>278</sup> This tendency can be observed in the Swedish foreign policy discourse whenever it comes to the question of strategic interests and power related bargaining on the international or global scene. This aspect is also closely related to what could be seen as the most ironic similarity between Sweden and Finland. Even though in recent years they have made very different politico-strategic choices, some kind of strong and intrinsic belief that within the EU and Europe they are politically ‘different’, if not superior to the average res, is common to both of them.<sup>279</sup>

### G. Councils, Associations, Unions, Leagues

There is a great bulk of studies dealing with the topic of ‘New’ Baltic Sea Regionalism in various different contexts. Scholars from both inside and outside the region have found very flowery descriptions for this phenomenon, pointing at the “myriads”<sup>280</sup> of cooperative undertakings that have “mushroomed”<sup>281</sup> “in the name of the Baltic world”.<sup>282</sup> To various extents, they have highlighted the pivotal role of identity or the newly emerging “we-feeling”, and tried to find explanations for the inherent dynamics of the regional activism around the Baltic Sea.

### I. Networks and Clusters

Given the complexity and amount of cooperative structures in the BSR, it is difficult to overlook the variety of actors and contents that they build upon. Many exponents in this tight network have very similar, if not identical, working agendas. When looking at the objectives of the various associations and cooperative ventures it seems as if there was a high potential of institutional and functional overlap. However, they differ in their way of approaching a certain issue, and most often, they deploy different means for similar objectives. Most importantly, they operate on diverse levels of action and thus, involve different types of actors. This is what Hubel and Gänzle called “positive overlap”. i.e. constructive division of labour in both functional and organisational terms instead of mere duplication of efforts and working structures.<sup>283</sup>

278 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Nordic Countries in the Baltic Region. In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 26-53 here p. 28.

279 For an extensive comparison between Sweden and Finland, including this aspect, see chapter “Excursus: Mare Europaeum – Whose Mare Nostrum?”, p. 111-.

280 VON SYDOW Emily: *Den Baltiska dimensionen. Stockholms geopolitiska roll i EU*. In: EHRLING Guy (ed.): *Stockholm international. En antologi om Stockholm i en regionaliserad och globaliserad värld*. Stockholm 2000, pp. 23-36, here 23. Von Sydow defined the proliferation of regionalist undertakings in the BSR as *svindlande* (Swed. vertigous) and added the humorous comment that sometimes it appears as if not even the ministers responsible for these regional agendas “were in the know” of what they are all about. See *ibid.* 26.

281 SCOTT James Wesley: Cross-border Governance in the Baltic Sea Region. In: ANDERSON James/O'DOWD Liam/WILSON Thomas M. (eds): *New Borders for a Changing Europe. Cross-border Cooperation and Governance*. London 2002, pp. 135-153, here p. 135.

282 LEHTI Marko: Competing or Complementary Images. The North and the Baltic World from the Historical Perspective. In: HAUKKALA Hiski (ed.): *Dynamic Aspects of the Northern Dimension*. Turku 1999, pp. 1-28, here p. 23.

283 See HUBEL Helmut/GÄNZLE Stefan: The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a Sub-Regional Organisation for ‘soft security risk management’ in the North-East of Europe. Report to the Presidency of the CBSS, 18 May 2001, p. 18.

Some of the associations in the BSR have built up formal or informal strategic partnerships and link together in organisational clusters. The two major coordinating hubs that stand at the centre of the two most important clusters are the CBSS for the regional level, and the UBC for the sub-regional level. In its function as an umbrella organisation, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) tries to pool and link the various associations in the BSR in various different ways. It has launched coordination meetings to bring the heads of regional associations together as well as an Internet Portal to provide a central point of reference for the distribution of information and the promotion of the BSR working agenda to a broad audience. Most importantly, it has established a network of strategic partners, aiming to provide a structured organisation, and thus, to enhance coordination and harmonisation. It links together the BDF, the BCCA, the BSSSC, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, the Baltic Sea Forum (BSF) – Pro Baltica, the Baltic Sea NGO Forum, the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN), HELCOM, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, the UBC, and CPMR-BSC. Together they officially refer to themselves as the “Baltic Sea Association” (BSA). In the sub-regional context, the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) plays a similar role. On the initiative of A. Engström, then President of the UBC, in October 1997, the leaders of the major sub-regional BSR associations decided to establish closer ties of cooperation and coordination between the different formations. Besides the UBC, the organisations clustering in this context are the BSSSC, CPMR-BSC, BDF, B7 Islands, and the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (BTC).<sup>284</sup>

Another virtual network that links formations on similar levels of action and with similar institutional characteristics and a similar degree of formalisation can be found between the three major scale councils in the Northern European sphere: The CBSS, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Arctic Council (AC). Reut called the group of three “the sub-regional engines of Northern Europe.”<sup>285</sup> The CBSS, the BEAC and the AC are very similar institutional constructs that cover a wider geographical area. They have partially intersecting, albeit not clashing catchment areas. The overlapping membership patterns with the AC, for instance, including all five Nordic states and Russia, do not lead to conflicts of interest. These regional bodies promote common values, harmonisation of regulatory frameworks and concerted operative action. Another case in point for an organisational cluster in the BSR is the close cooperative interrelation between the Nordic and Baltic Council of Ministers as well as between the Nordic Council and the Baltic Assembly. Their cooperative relationship and their modes of interaction will be subject to closer investigation in one of the following section of this study.<sup>286</sup>

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284 See UBC Bulletin, issue 3/1997, p. 2. Official UBC website [www.ubc.net](http://www.ubc.net) [30 November 2007].

285 REUT Oleg: Asymmetry of and in Dimensionalism. In: North Meets North Proceedings of the 1st Northern Research Forum. Akureyri and Bessastaðir, 4-6 November 2000, pp. 174-178, here p. 174.

286 See chapter “Nordic-Baltic Co-operation”, p. 72-.

## II. Patterns of Cooperation: Sorting out the Mess

Despite the proliferation of studies on Baltic Sea regionalism, there still is a clear lack of contributions that would attempt to enumerate and interpret the wide array of regionalist formations, coalitions, projects and initiatives in detail.<sup>287</sup> While it would definitely go beyond the scope of this study to trace back the development process of each cooperative formation that emerged in the BSR after the end of the Cold War, it seems useful to at least give an overview to illustrate the organisational and political diversity at hand and to structure the array of organisations present in the region.<sup>288</sup>

	policy fields and working agenda																		
Name	Year of Establishment	Governance model	Type of actors	Organising principle	Institutionalisation	Environment	Business	Technology	Art and Culture	Spatial Planning	Debordering	Research – Academia	Tourism	Maritime issues	History tool	Inclusive Baltiness	Linkage to EU	Non-EU members	Vision or Strategy
ACMBS	91	TNA	NO	SC	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	NL	TB	S
Ars Baltica	91	TNW	NO	SC	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	NL	TB	S
Baltic 21	96	EPJ	all	SC	L	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	FL	TB	S
BaltMet	02	TNW	SS	LP	L	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	FL	TB	V
BCF	94	TNW	NO	LP	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	IL	TB	S
BDF	98	TNW	all	LP	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	NL	TB	S
BEIDS	98	EPJ	NO	SC	?	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	FL	TB	S
BIF	94	? <sup>289</sup>	all	LP	H	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	NL	TB	?
BPO	91	TNA	NO	LP	L	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	NL	TB	S
BRN	99	TNA	NO	LP	L	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NL	TB	S
BSC-CPMR	96	TNA	SS	IG	M	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	FL	TB <sup>290</sup>	S
BSF	92	TNA	all	LP	L	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	IL	N	S
BSSSC	93	TNA	SS	IG	H	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	FL	TB	S
CBSS	92	IGA	OS	IG	H	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	FL	TB	S
CCB	90	TNA	NO	LP	L	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	NL	TB	S
Helcom	74	IRE	OS	IG	M	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	FL	TB	S
UBC	91	TNW	SS	IG	M	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	FL	TB	V
VASAB	92	IGA	all	IG	M	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	IL	TB	S

**Table 9: Cooperative Structures and Formations in the BSR: Synoptic Overview**

<sup>287</sup> Deas provides one of the few positive exceptions in this regard. He tried to identify the structural nature of various micro- and meso-regionalist formations all across Europe, thus offering a valuable contribution to the conceptualisation of the type of regionalism prominent in the BSR. Some factors applied in this chapter were inspired by Deas' considerations about the nature of "Unusual Regionalism". See DEAS Iain: From a New Regionalism to an Unusual Regionalism? Mapping the emergence of non-standard regional configurations in Europe. Manchester 2004. See also KERN Christine/LÖFFELSEND Tina: Governance Beyond the Nation-State: Transnationalization and Europeanization of the Baltic Sea Region. In: *Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB), Discussion Paper SPS IV 2004-105*. Berlin 2004.

<sup>288</sup> Cases where a certain category is not applicable are marked with an '?'.  
<sup>289</sup> The BIF could be categorised as a self-standing institution that was established on the basis of a Finnish domestic initiative.

<sup>290</sup> Since 2004, most member states of the BSC-CPMR are also formal members of the EU (except Norway). The BSC does not include Russia.

The overview is based on the following categories:

**Year of establishment:** shows to what extent the end of the Cold War can be perceived as a decisive marker in the process of regionalism in Northern Europe;

**Governance model:** distinguishing between

- transnational associations [TNA],
- intergovernmental associations [IGA],
- international regimes [IRE],
- transnational fora and networks [TNW],
- self-organising [PJ], and
- embedded projects [EPJ].

**Type of actors:** according to governance model, informing about the nature and type of actors involved in the respective formation, distinguishing between

- official actors: state- [OS] and sub-state [SS], and
- non-official actors [NO].

**Organising principle:** specifies whether a formation is organised according to an

- intergovernmental [IG],
- state-centric [SC] or
- loose pattern [LP].

This category has to be distinguished from the governance model and the typification of actors. An intergovernmentally organised formation cannot only include official actors at state or sub-state level. This categorisation depends on the way the respective association administers its activities and on the way it presents itself to the public.

**Degree of institutionalisation:** classifies the level of formalisation

- low [L], no institutionalisation, very loose structure;
- medium [M], simple structure, e.g. a central management unit or secretariat;
- high [H], established and complex structure, formalised division of labour.

**Policy fields and working agendas:** informs about the frequency of policy fields commonly relevant in the BSR regionalist context, such as environment and environmental security, research, art and culture etc. This illustrates the degree of positive functional overlap between the various regionalist formations.

**Linkage to the EU:** classification depends on whether the respective formation holds a

- formal [FL],
- informal link [IL] or
- no link [NL] to the EU or one of its major institutions.

**Linkage to the non-EU states and actors:** informs about whether an association stretches beyond the EU-border, and has thus a trans-border or trans-European quality or objective. It indicates whether ‘extracommunitarian’ actors have been involved and included since the point of its establishment (e.g. Russia, Russian stakeholders or Russian civil society actors, but also former candidate countries).

- trans-border [TB] or
- non-inclusive [N]

**Identity or pragmatism, vision or strategy:** drawing on the objectives and normative foundations of each formation, this category distinguishes associations pursuing a

- vision [V], initiatives and associations that avail themselves of value-laden arguments such as the one of inclusive Balticness or of common heritage, to justify their objectives and activities; this implies i.a. the employment of the above-mentioned history tool or other approaches that build on identity-related self-justification;
- or a strategy [S], meaning an approach that is pragmatic and solution-oriented and argumentatively tends to underline challenges instead of common heritage.

The scheme is not exhaustive in the sense that it does not include *all* regionalist formations that emerged in the BSR after the end of the Cold War. It is restricted to the associations and initiatives that have shown enduring operability and have undergone substantial steps of structural consolidation, either in terms of institutional formalisation or by way of producing manifest policy outputs. The scheme shows that a great part of the organisations and initiatives in the BSR operate at the sub-state level: the actors involved represent regions, local entities, cities or non-official bodies and interest groups. Most associations and cooperative formations adhere to the governance model of transnational networks and fora, involving in most cases a low or medium level of institutionalisation. They feature various forms of politics, involving anything from a council, to a simple secretariat or mere intergovernmental meetings or irregular fora. However, only few of them avail themselves of extensive formalisation for the pursuit of their strategic objectives. Intergovernmental patterns of organisation are particularly prominent at both the sub-regional and regional level.

Cooperating actors and partners show a high preference of organising themselves according to their nation state affiliation. Generally, the regionalist activities in the BSR seem to be rather practice-oriented and pragmatic, while only few exception show a strong tendency for value-laden argumentation and ‘thick’ normative foundations. Baldersheim and Ståhlberg pointed out that a great number of Baltic Sea organisations could be characterised as “organised partnerships” based on loose structures in order to enable the respective group of actors to solve common problems or to face common challenges.<sup>291</sup> When seeking to explain this general tendency for pragmatic institutional solutions one could argue that the creation of regimes instead of supranational constructs certainly provides for enhanced functional and structural flexibility. This organisational choice and strategic orientation is, not least, likely to allay the fears state actors might have in regard to potential infringements on their national sovereignty.<sup>292</sup>

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291 BALDERSHEIM Harald/STÅHLBERG Krister: The Dynamics of Cross-Border Region-Building and Nordic Co-operation. In: Idd. (eds): *Nordic Region-Building in a European Perspective*. Aldershot 1999, pp. 165-174, here p. 165.

292 See JOHANSSON Elisabeth: EU and its Near Neighbourhood: Subregionalization in the Baltic Sea and in the Mediterranean. In: WILLA Pierre/LEVRAT Nicolas (eds): *Actors and Models. Assessing the European Union’s External Capability and Influence*. Genève 2001, pp. 200-222, here p. 205.

## Chapter 3: The EU Northern Dimension

### A. Introduction: The EU Approach Towards the North

An assessment of the “EU approach towards the North” (or “Northern Europe”) as it is addressed in this chapter should include all policy initiatives and programmes that generally deal with regionness in Europe as well as with issues like (re)bordering and the development of transnational cooperation.<sup>293</sup> The analytical objective behind this exercise lies in the identification and characterisation of what could be called the supranational context conditioning cross-border cooperation and all patterns and processes that relate to the emergence and establishment of regional entities in the widest sense of the term. Given the amount and variety of different policy areas that are likely to be relevant from this perspective, such an assessment cannot be exhaustive. However, it can serve as a point of reference for the analysis of single state policy conduct within a European region, or rather a region that in various different ways is related to, influenced by and potentially, impacting on, the wider framework of European integration.

The EU has played an important role in the post Cold War development of Northern Europe, and most importantly, of the BSR. First and foremost, the EU must be regarded as the most important provider of security and stability in the BSR. It is arguably the most significant soft security actor in the region, even if from a critical point of view mainly “by sheer merit of its attraction and the ensuing disciplinary effect.”<sup>294</sup> However, the political stability of the Northeastern sphere of the European continent has been one of the main ambitions of the European project after 1989. Generally, there are two ways of how the EU can approach and affect a region like the BSR: (1) as a *political actor* that disposes of concrete instruments to address *specific* regional challenges, and (2) in the sense of its indirect impact as a normative *framework*, and as a political and ideological point of reference for various state- and non-state actors, and their respective regional orientation and strategies (i.e. through the above-stated “disciplinary effect”).

In practice, it proves to be difficult to distinguish clearly between these two categories. The EU policy approaches towards Northern Europe include a variety of instruments that comply with either one of each, or both categories. In 1998, the EU has established a specific framework for its policy actions and objectives in Northern and Northeastern Europe, the so-called “Northern Dimension” (EU ND).<sup>295</sup> Other EU policies, like the general process of EU enlargement, and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), had a more indirect albeit not less important impact on the region.

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293 See KRAMSCH Olivier/PIJPERS Roos/PLUG Roald/VAN HOUTUM Henk: Project Study Report. EXLINEA (Lines of Exclusion as Arenas of Co-operation Reconfiguring the External Boundaries of Europe Policies, Practices and Perceptions). Research on the Policy of the European Commission Towards the Re-bordering of the European Union. Nijmegen 2004, p. 1.

294 See MOROFF Holger: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): European Soft Security Policies. The Northern Dimension. Kauhava 2002, pp. 12-36, here p. 17.

295 See A Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union. Communication from the Commission. COM(1998) 0589 final, 25 November 1998.

The following chapter deals with some of the EU policies, instruments and institutions that have or had a direct or indirect impact on the regional development in Northern Europe: the EU enlargement process, the establishment of the EU Committee of the Regions, the EU programmes and instruments in the field of regional development, and the most recently released ENP. The EU policy directly designed for the Northern European sphere, the EU ND, will also be shortly introduced at this point in order to complete the overall picture of how the EU approaches this part of Europe as an actor in this region or sub-region. However, the background of its establishment and its political significance will be revisited in greater detail at another point of this study.<sup>296</sup>

### *I. Enlarging the Union – Association, Partnership and Accession in the BSR*

In the history of the European project, enlargement has proved to be a very strong and successful stability instrument. Missiroli called enlargement “a quintessential security policy” that has had remarkable success all over the European continent, and more specifically, also in respect to the stabilisation of the Baltic Sea Rim.<sup>297</sup> The two enlargement rounds that directly affected the BSR, the 1995 EU accessions of Sweden and Finland, and the 2004 accessions of the three Baltic States and Poland, have decisively changed the geopolitical landscape in Northern Europe, and have additionally altered the overall international profile of the European Union.

#### *1. The Swedish and Finnish EU Accession*

The Nordic States have traditionally shown an inherent reluctance towards regional political cooperation. Consequently, they were also among the last European core countries to seek formal EC/EU membership.<sup>298</sup>

Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland were absent at the creation of the Treaty of Rome and eventually joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), a more limited trade partnership that was less threatening to national control over policy than EC membership would have been.<sup>299</sup>

The key argument used by Sweden and Finland in order to legitimise their reluctance towards wider European integration had mainly been related to their foreign and security political orientation. Given the supranational ambitions of the European project in many political areas, the neutral status was seen as a strong condition of (self)exclusion.

Nordic governments long viewed political integration with the European Community and other entangling alliances such as NATO as options of last resort, and instead, these states have maintained the greatest possible distance from supranational forms of cooperation.<sup>300</sup>

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296 See chapter “The EU Northern Dimension – Showcase for the Swedish-Finnish Divide?”, p. 132-, and chapter “Evaluation: The EU ND Reconsidered”, p. 148-.

297 MISSIROLI Antonio: *The European Union and Its Periphery. Stabilisation, Integration, Partnership*. Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). Occasional Papers, No. 32. Geneva 2002, p. 5.

298 With the exception of Denmark which became a full EU member in 1973 (just as Greenland, which however, withdrew membership in 1985).

299 INGEBRITSEN Christine: *The Nordic States and European Unity*. Cornell 1998, p. 5.

300 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

In the late 1980s, there were first indications for a shift in the Swedish and Finnish policy orientation towards the European project. The Austrian application for formal membership posed in July 1989 came as a surprise to both Sweden and Finland. It was most of all Sweden that had excluded the membership option over decades with recurrent reference to its official status of permanent neutrality (Swed. *alliansfrihet*).<sup>301</sup> The Swedish accession was preceded by a decade long domestic struggle both between and within the political parties. The overall dependence on public support led to the persistence of largely fuzzy attitudes. Now that even Austria – whose neutrality clause had always been perceived far more rigid and exclusive – had applied for membership, the inner-Swedish debate naturally gained new momentum. However, it was the progressive decline of the Swedish economy that eventually opened the doors of traditional Swedish reluctance towards wider European integration.<sup>302</sup> After in 1990 a last attempt of the social democratic government to find a domestic solution for the crisis had failed, the way to the Swedish membership application was paved. The official application request was posed on the 1 July 1991.

The suspicion that economic considerations had tipped the balance was strengthened by the fact that Prime Minister Carlsson left it to Finance Minister Allan Larsson to announce the new integration policy. The government's haste in dealing with this issue was also evident from the fact that it had not taken the time to inform the other Nordic governments in advance.<sup>303</sup>

The Finnish application occurred comparably late, in March 1992.<sup>304</sup> The formal request was submitted after a short and uncontroversial debate and without any greater discussion in public. The reason for this very different political atmosphere preceding the accession is to be found in the specific Finnish Cold War experience.

Because of the FCMA Treaty Finland was an exception among European neutrals. Permanent neutrality, according to the Swiss and Austrian model, imposed an obligation to the countries concerned to remain outside all wars, an idea also inherent in the Swedish neutrality doctrine. Finland's position was different because the FCMA Treaty included an obligation to abstain from neutrality under specific circumstances defined in the Treaty. It was precisely this deviation from the fundamental purpose of neutrality – neutrality in war – which was the most original feature of Finland's Cold War neutrality policy.<sup>305</sup>

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301 Sweden had already applied for EC membership in July 1967; however, this first attempt of entering the Community was dismissed by a French veto (in the context of the British case). Once there would have been another chance to pose another request for membership, the Swedish ambitions had already dissolved due to domestic struggles between the political parties but also due to the negative opinion in the Swedish public. For more details, see MILES Lee: *Sweden and Security*. In: REDMOND John (ed.): *The 1995 Enlargement of the European Union*. Aldershot 2000.

302 See HADENIUS, Stig: *Modern svensk politisk historia. Konflikt och samförstånd*. Stockholm 2003, pp. 219-220.

303 LUIF Paul: *On the Road to Brussels. The Political Dimension of Austria's, Finland's and Sweden's Accession to the European Union*. Vienna 1995, p. 216.

304 It was only the Norwegian request that was posed even later, in November 1992.

305 RUHALA Kalevi: *Alliance and Non-Alignment at the Onset of the 21st Century*. In: RIES Tomas/HULDT Bo/MÖRTBERG Jan/DAVIDSON Elisabeth (eds): *The New Northern Security Agenda. Perspectives from Finland and Sweden*. Strategic Yearbook 2004, pp. 103-118, here p. 114.



The fall of the Soviet regime had major repercussions for Finnish sovereignty, and most significantly, for its freedom of action in the foreign and security political field. After having been locked in the formal obligations of the so-called Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (TFCMA) over decades, both the Finnish political leaders and the Finnish public were ready and willing to take the newly opened opportunities in order to enhance integration in the wider European project. For Finland, the question of EU membership was very much about a “return to Europe” and the liberation from past dependencies both in political and ideological terms. In the late 1980s, the Finnish economy had also been caught by a progressing commercial crisis. Finland had to face a difficult economic situation as the intense and lucrative commercial relations it had maintained with the Soviet Union during the Cold War broke down after 1989/90.<sup>306</sup> However, the political pressure emanating from the unclear post Soviet situation was much more decisive in respect to the Finnish attitude towards EU accession. While for Sweden, the economic motives constituted the main reason for immediate application, Finland still had to consider the potential security political consequences overhasty action could have had in the immediate post Cold War situation. In fact, the Finnish membership request had to be delayed for months until the bilateral relationship with Russia allowed for this decisive step.<sup>307</sup>

From the EU perspective, this second Northern enlargement involving the two Nordic core countries has been a largely uncontroversial event. Both candidates exceeded the threshold standards that should qualify them for full membership. Since Sweden even abstained from posing any sort of reservation concerning its neutrality policy, even the security political circumstances were largely serene.<sup>308</sup> Also the Finnish quest for enhanced security to protect it against Russia did not find much visibility on the European scene. Hence, the enlargement event itself gained fairly little public attention in the other 12 Member States.<sup>309</sup>

Once the round had been concluded and Sweden and Finland had entered the Union formally in January 1995, the Northern case was quickly removed from the public debate, and the main strategic interests of the EU turned (back) to the eastern sphere and the expected ‘Big Bang’ enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast, some analysts have repeatedly claimed that this enlargement had added a Northern dimension to the European working agenda – and that the launch of the Northern Dimension policy had then been a natural if not mandatory step of the European project towards a more active stance in this part of the continent.<sup>310</sup>

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306 See ARTER David: *Scandinavian Politics Today*. Manchester 1999, p. 334. See also DUBOIS Jeroen: *The Northern Dimension as Prototype of the Wider Europe Framework Policy*. University of Liverpool, Working Paper. Liverpool 2004, p. 1.

307 See LIPPONEN Paavo: *Finnish Neutrality and EC Membership*. In: HARDEN Sheila (ed.): *Neutral States and the European Community*. London 1994, pp. 63-103, here p. 80.

308 For an extended discussion of the issue of neutrality in the European integration context, see GEBHARD Carmen: *Europäische Integration und Neutralität. Österreich und Schweden im Vergleich. Diplomarbeit* Vienna 2004.

309 The Swedish-Finnish enlargement could – with the likely exception of Switzerland and Norway – be seen as a last step in the “Western European process of market integration” before the process of “Europe reuniting again” started in the end of the 1990s. See CHRISTIANSEN Thomas: *Towards Statehood? The EU’s move towards Constitutionalisation and Territorialisation*. In: Centre for European Studies. University of Oslo (ed.): *ARENA Working Paper*, No. 21, August 2005, p. 20.

310 For more on this argument, see chapter “The Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative”, p. 132-.

## 2. The Baltic States

The EU policy of enlargement towards the Baltic States passed through the various traditional stages of formal integration: full membership has been anticipated by bilateral trade agreements and the conclusion of association agreements.<sup>311</sup> The following table gives a brief overview of the most important stages in this mid term integration process.<sup>312</sup>

27 August 1991	The EU recognises the independence of the Baltic States
11 May 1992	Conclusion of Agreements on Trade and Commercial Economic Cooperation
27 January 1994	Lithuania joins the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme
3 February 1994	Estonia joins the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme
18 July 1994	Latvia joins the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme
9 May 1994	The Baltic States are admitted to the WEU (associate partners)
18 July 1994	EU signs free trade agreements with the three Baltic States
10 December 1994	The European Council of Essen adopts a pre-accession strategy
27 October 1995	Latvia submits EC membership application
28 November 1995	Estonia submits EC membership application
08 December 1995	Lithuania submits EC membership application
31 March 1998	EU starts accession negotiations with Estonia
15 February 2000	EU starts accession negotiations with Lithuania and Latvia
November 2000	NATO accession talks start
16 April 2003	Signing of the accession treaties for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
29 March 2004	NATO accession of the three Baltic States
1 May 2004	EU accession of the three Baltic States

**Table 10: Chronology – the European Integration Process of the Baltic States**

Unlike the Northern enlargement in 1995, the 2004 accession round including the Baltic States, had very strong ideological implications. Its preparation was framed by the overarching motto of European re-unification, and accordingly, for the candidate countries themselves it was mainly an issue of ‘returning to Europe’ after a long period

<sup>311</sup> The case of Poland will not be considered in detail since the Baltic cases appear to be more relevant for the development of regionalism in the BSR, and thus, for the research purpose of this study.

<sup>312</sup> The scheme also includes important developments such as NATO accessions, since they are thought to have major repercussions on the way the BSR is positioned on the virtual strategic map of Europe. The scope of this chapter will not allow for a detailed discussion of the pre-accession processes in the Baltic States. For more information, see PETTAI Vello/ZIELONKA Jan (eds): *The Road to the European Union*, Vol. 2. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Manchester 2003.

of dependence and ideological confinement.<sup>313</sup> From the early 1990s onwards, the “return to Europe” was an omnipresent topic in all three Baltic States. The EU and NATO symbolised a sense of belonging to Europe, or the West.

Thus, the declaration to be European or Western implied a clear political programme of striving to join these institutions.<sup>314</sup>

The rhetoric in the Baltic public was also dominated by the issue of being and feeling “abnormal”, and accordingly, by the wish to achieve the state of political “normality”. The whole era of Soviet rule was perceived as a state of abnormity and “false history”. Normality in turn was not a clearly defined set of circumstances, but it was a notion as vague as being part of the “West” again. Thus, the integration into Western institutions was deemed the sole possibility for the Baltic States to re-gain the state of normality.<sup>315</sup> The accession of the Baltic States could generally not be seen separate from the bilateral relations of both the EU and the Baltic States with Russia. What Carl Bildt called the Litmus test for Russia’s new direction after the breakdown of the Soviet empire, meaning its policies towards the Baltic States after their independence, was indeed a crucial factor in the EU relationship with Russia.<sup>316</sup> As for the Baltic States, formal membership in both NATO and EU equally opened new channels across which they could encounter their big neighbour.

Membership of the EU and NATO gave the Baltic decision makers a firm ground, confidence and structural power they never had before to deal with Russia.<sup>317</sup>

## II. *The EU Committee of the Regions*

The legal establishment of the EU Committee of the Regions (CoR) in the course of the treaty of Maastricht was based on very different and partly diverging positions among the regional representations of the EU Member States.<sup>318</sup> The German *Länder* as well as the Belgian and Austrian federal provinces were among the first sub-national actors that expressed reservations about the way in which the distribution of the then European Community’s regional support was increasingly held to the responsibility of member state governments, i.e. the national level. In a parallel development, the progress of the overall European integration process, most importantly the Single European Act (SEA)

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313 See KEMPE Iris: Russia, the EU and the Baltic States. Filling in a strategic white spot on the European map. In: BUHBE Matthes/KEMPE Iris (eds): Russia, the EU and the Baltic States. Enhancing the Potential for Cooperation. Moscow 2005, pp. 3-4, here p. 4.

314 LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? Classifying the Balts in the Post-Cold War Era. In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): Wider Europe. Nordic and Baltic Lessons to Post-Enlargement Europe. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 71.

315 See EGLITIS Daina Stukuls: Imagining the Nation. History, Modernity, and Revolution in Latvia. Pennsylvania 2004, p. 8.

316 See BILDt Carl: The Baltic Litmus Test. Revealing Russia? In: Foreign Affairs, September/October 1994, pp. 72-85.

317 PAULASKAS Kęstutis: The Baltics. From Nation States to Member States. European Institute for Security Studies (EU-ISS), Occasional Papers, No. 62. Paris 2006, p. 39. See also chapter “The Baltic States and Baltic Unity – Imposition or Expedient?”, p. 67-. For more about the role of Sweden and Finland in the context of the Baltic enlargement, see chapter “Sweden, Finland and the BSR”, p. 128-.

318 See also chapter “What kind of ‘Europe of the Regions’?”, p. 206-.

in 1987, the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, and the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, progressively eroded the individual autonomy of the member states, and thus, brought regional factors to the forefront.<sup>319</sup>

These developments have made the ‘regional dimension’ more central to European policies in general and have strengthened the participation and representation of regions and local authorities in European policy-making. EU regional policy now finds itself within the broader and more systematic ‘Structural Action Policy’, designed to bring about social and economic cohesion in the Union, which also includes social policy and part of agricultural policy. Regional policy now has the second largest budget of all EU policies, behind only the Common Agricultural Policy.<sup>320</sup>

However, the overall development of the European project forms only one side of the coin. In recent years, European states have shown a clear tendency towards internal decentralisation. What Sharpe called the “rise of meso government,” meaning the growing salience of regions within Member States, coincided with, was influenced by and in turn influenced the general course of European integration.<sup>321</sup> Most significantly, the establishment of the CoR was anticipated by a set of inter-regional activities that had been launched since the late 1950s, linking regions and local entities all across Europe. Among the most important examples in this respect is the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, the Council of Municipal and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Assembly of the European Regions (AER) and the Association of Cross-Border Regions. The AER indeed played an active role in the debate preceding the establishment of the CoR, enthusiastically lobbying for a formalised incorporation of regional entities into the institutional framework of the EU.<sup>322</sup>

As for the EU internal debate, pressure for some sort of regional representation at the Council of Ministers could mainly be felt in those member states where the federal principle was already firmly established. Most notably for the French regions that had been newly empowered in the course of the 1980s, the idea of a direct conduit to the European institutions has been very attractive. Other more centralised states such as Greece or Ireland, on the other hand, recognized the potential of EU regional funding and, consequently, started to consider measures of decentralisation in order to qualify for regional programmes. The United Kingdom wished at all costs to avoid the empowerment of a regional or a sub-national level of governance that could have been seen as a step towards a federal Europe.

By endorsing the creation of an exclusively consultative body devoid of legislative powers, the UK could claim to be cooperating with European partners without endangering its own Member State role.<sup>323</sup>

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319 See WAGSTAFF Peter: The Committee of the Regions of the European Union. In: Id. (ed.): Regionalism in the European Union. Wiltshire 1999, pp. 188-193, here p. 189.

320 LOUGHLIN John: Representing Regions in Europe. The Committee of the Regions. In: JEFFERY Charlie (ed.): The Regional Dimension of the European Union. Towards a Third Level in Europe. London/Portland 1997, pp. 147-165, here 148.

321 See SHARPE Laurence James (ed.): The Rise of Meso Government in Europe. London 1993.

322 See LOUGHLIN John: Representing Regions in Europe. The Committee of the Regions. In: JEFFERY Charlie (ed.): The Regional Dimension of the European Union. Towards a Third Level in Europe. London/Portland 1997, pp. 147-165, here 150.

323 Ibid., here 148.

Generally, there was support for the formal establishment of a regional representation, in varying degrees and for a variety of reasons. The respective provision in the Maastricht Treaty claimed for “an advisory committee of representatives of regional and local authorities, hence to be called the Committee of the Regions.”<sup>324</sup> This was largely perceived as a considerable breakthrough with regard to the position of regions and other regional entities in the EU even though legally, the CoR did not range at the same level as the Council of Ministers, the Commission and the European Parliament.

The operationalisation of the legal provision faced a set of problems primarily linked to the variety of regions and regional entities acting and interacting within and across the EU Member States. An early debate resulted from the fact that the Member State governments were given freedom to choose about how to fill their allocated seats. CoR members should be elected representatives within their own regions; however, there were no rigid restrictions applied as to the structural constituency of a “region” or “regional entity”. Such strict measures would have disqualified more than half of the respective entities at regional and local level. The institution emerging from this selection process was, somewhat understandably, a “highly heterogeneous body.”<sup>325</sup> The CoR members nominated by each member state were subject to an immense variation in both territorial and structural terms. In some cases, such as with Luxembourg, there was no regional tier but only a local level of representation. In other Member States, in turn there was either both a local and a regional representation, or an additional intermediate level of organisation, such as in France. Given this complexity it was to be expected that the decisions about working practice of the new institutional body, and its presidency were to become a rather sensitive issue.<sup>326</sup>

A number of policy areas has been selected for obligatory consultancy by the decision-making bodies of the EU, namely education, culture, public health, trans-European networks for transport, telecommunications and energy as well as economic and social cohesion. However, not only the range of subjects is limited; the opinions offered by the Committee are also not legally binding. None of the other European institutions has to take the CoR recommendations into account. Given this multiple weakness of the Committee, it is not surprising that, in recent years, it has tried to increase its influence and the effectivity of its consultative output. In the course of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) preceding the Treaty of Amsterdam, various regional and local players tried to defend and reinforce the status of the Committee within the institutional setting of the EU. The Treaty of Amsterdam produced only modest gains for the CoR.

The range of subjects on which it must be consulted has been enlarged to include aspects of employment, social policy, health, the environment, vocational training and transport. It has also been granted the status of ‘expert’ on matters concerning cross-border cooperation. In addition, it has gained a greater measure of administrative freedom to the extent that is now permitted to develop its own internal regulations.<sup>327</sup>

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324 See Art. 198a TEU.

325 See COLLINS Stephan/JEFFERY Charlie: *Whither the Committee of the Regions? British and German Perspectives*. London 1997, p. 6.

326 See WAGSTAFF Peter: *The Committee of the Regions of the European Union*. In: Id. (ed.): *Regionalism in the European Union*. Wiltshire 1999, pp. 188-193, here p. 191.

327 *Ibid.*, here p. 193.

Even though the institutional development of the CoR has not been a clear success story, its added value for the European representation of various different regional entities remains.

Nevertheless, the CoR can claim to have contributed to European integration. Independent of what subsequently happens to the Opinions it issues, the CoR provides an open and public forum for discussion among a variety of different types of government. Such regular debate and deliberations can have long-term benefits in terms of achieving better understanding among these different organisations, developing common perspectives on policies and searching for solutions to problems. It also acts as a catalyst for regional and local politicians to network with each other. It has allowed representatives from different national domains who – without the CoR – might not have the chance, or even see the need, to discuss EU policies with one another.<sup>328</sup>

This positive assessment notwithstanding, it must be emphasised that these apparent assets do not comply with the original objectives underlying the formal establishment of the Committee.

### *III. The EU Performance in Regional Development: E.S.D.P. and INTERREG*

The development of a European perspective on spatial planning started in the beginning of the 1980s. The Directorate-General for Regional Policy and Cohesion, today also known as “DG Regio” held a prominent role in this development. However, in 1984, it was in the framework of the Council of Europe that first steps towards a “real European planning” were taken. The so-called Torremolinos Charter (European Regional Spatial Planning Charter) was launched in 1994, based on the objective of balancing the socio-economic development of the regions within Europe, improving the quality of life, introducing responsible management strategies for natural resources and the protection of the environment, as well as rational land use. The SEA (1987) and the moves towards the Single Market (1992) have gradually increased European concerns with specific patterns of regional development.<sup>329</sup>

In 1991, the European Commission launched the ‘Europe 2000’ Communication about “Views on the Development of the Territory of the Community”, analysing the multiple pressures on Europe’s territory arising from socio-economic developments as well as from national, regional and Community interventions. In 1994, it was followed by ‘Europe 2000 Plus’ Communication on the “Co-operation for the Spatial Development of Europe” updating and extending the analysis in ‘Europe 2000’, and making the case for co-operation in the field of spatial planning across Europe. In 1991, the Committee on Spatial Development, bringing together the member state spatial planning ministers, was established in order to develop the European Spatial Development Perspective (E.S.D.P.), which was eventually launched in 1999. Even though in the first years, the E.S.D.P. remained somewhat inexact and vague, it marked an important step in the overall course of development.

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328 CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/LINTNER Pamela: Has the CoR been a success? An independent view. In: WELCH Graham (ed.): The Committee of the Regions. The voice of local government in Europe. Local Government International Bureau. International Report Number 12. London 2006, pp. 17-21, here p. 18.

329 See JENSEN Ole B./RICHARDSON Tim: Nested Visions. New Rationalities of Space in European Spatial Planning. In: Regional Studies, No. 8/2001, pp. 703-717, here p. 705.

The E.S.D.P. symbolised the official EU commitment to territorial cohesion by promoting the vision of horizontally integrated geographic territories rather than vertically structured spaces. And most importantly, it marked territoriality as a new dimension in EU policies. Even though the E.S.D.P. does not have any statutory force at the supranational level, it has undoubtedly stimulated pioneering actions to begin to develop more meaningful spatial planning provisions within and across European regions and sub-regions.<sup>330</sup>

Kai Böhme points at the fact that in the Scandinavian countries, officials even had considerable problems to translate the name of the E.S.D.P. into their respective language, and eventually, had to choose rather fuzzy and vague expressions *describing* the issue of spatial planning rather than denominating it in specific terms. Sweden chose *Det regionala utvecklingsperspektivet inom Europeiska unionen* (The Regional Development Perspective in the European Union) and Denmark *Det europæiske fysiske og funktionelle udviklingsperspektiv* (The European Physical and Functional Development Perspective) as a label for the E.S.D.P.

The language predicament illustrates the situation in reality: that there is no such thing as spatial planning in Scandinavia – otherwise there would be a term for it.<sup>331</sup>

The E.S.D.P. challenged the Nordic Member Countries to rethink their spatial planning concepts and development systems. The respective political discourse in Sweden has been rather reluctant, while Finland illustrated that change was not only possible but also openly welcome.<sup>332</sup>

There are a number of issues where the European planning co-operation functions as a promoter or even an eye-opener in Scandinavia. It gives strength to the regional level and to territorial perspectives and it challenges the sector divide between planning and development. Certainly, not all European spatial topics are of relevance in all countries, but all of them give input to a discussion on spatial positioning. Scandinavia faces a challenge, as Nordic co-operation hardly touches on the question of spatial positioning, whereas both BSR and North Sea Region co-operation have elements of spatial positioning.<sup>333</sup>

Responding to the encouragement to contribute to the establishment of a “polycentric trans-European development” promoted in the E.S.D.P. framework, member states showed strong aspirations to create new regional territorial structures. This development paved the way for the later INTERREG II initiative. The INTERREG Community initiative was first launched in 1990, in order to support European border regions with the challenges posed by their specific geopolitical position. While the INTERREG I initiative (1990-1993) had been very limited in both scope and content, the INTERREG II initiative (1995-1999) was considerably extended and more elaborate.

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330 See FALUDI Andreas: The Application of the European Spatial Development Perspective. Evidence from the North West Metropolitan Area. In: European Planning Studies 9/2001, pp. 663-675, here p. 668.

331 See BÖHME Kai: The Scandinavian Countries and European Spatial Development Perspectives. In: Id./HANSEN Malin (eds): Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region. Implications of European Spatial Development. Stockholm 2001, pp. 1-6, here p. 1.

332 Ibid., here p. 6.

333 BÖHME Kai: The Scandinavian Countries and European Spatial Development Perspectives. In: Id./HANSEN Malin (eds): Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea Region. Implications of European Spatial Development. Stockholm 2001, pp. 1-6, here p. 6.

Taking into account the various forms of cooperation across borders, the Community divided its INTERREG II initiative into three strands of activity.<sup>334</sup>

- IIA cross-border cooperation: between adjacent regions, aims to develop cross-border social and economic centres through common development strategies; the cross-border quality implies that the principle partners lie on both sides of the border; otherwise they are required to demonstrate the interest and impact for the overall cross-border region.
- IIB transnational cooperation: involves national, regional and local authorities and aims to promote better integration within the EU through the formation of large groups of European Regions; “transnationality” implies that there are at least two cooperating parties from two different member states, and the project must have an overall impact on the cooperation area.
- IIC inter-regional co-operation: aims to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and instruments through large-scale information exchange and sharing of experience (networks); interregional cooperation should aim at multiplying the effects of other regional development policies.

This trifold structure was also employed for the then following INTERREG III Initiative (2000-2006), which prominently involved Northern European partners.

<p>INTERREG IIIA</p> <p>Skårgården</p> <p>Kvarken-Mittskandia</p> <p>Sweden-Norway</p> <p>Öresund</p> <p>Karelia-Russia</p> <p>Southeast</p> <p>Finland-Russia</p> <p>Nordkalotten-Kolartie</p> <p>Finland-Estonia</p>	<p>INTERREG IIIB</p> <p>South Baltic Arc – Spatial</p> <p>Strategies for Integration</p> <p>and Sustainable</p> <p>Development Acceleration</p> <p>Baltic Sea Region</p> <p>North Sea Region</p> <p>Northern Periphery</p>	<p>INTERREG IIIC</p> <p>For administrative reasons,</p> <p>Interreg IIIC has been</p> <p>divided into four sections,</p> <p>with the BSR building the</p> <p>so-called “North Section”.<sup>335</sup></p> <p>The North section is</p> <p>presently engaged in 35</p> <p>IIIC-operations.<sup>336</sup></p>
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**Table 11: INTERREG III programmes in Northern Europe (2001-2006)**

The most important project for the region is the Baltic Sea INTERREG IIIB Programme, which in 2000 succeeded INTERREG IIC Baltic Sea. It is sponsored by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as part of the Structural Funds, and co-financed by national project partners. The actions conducted in the framework of INTERREG IIIB BSR involve eleven countries: Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden as EU member states; North-West Russia and

334 See Website of the EU Inforegio [ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm) [25 December 2006].

335 The North Section includes entire Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway, as well as the German Länder Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen, Schleswig-Holstein, and the Polish Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Warminsko-Mazurskie, and Podlaskie.

336 See official INTERREG IIIC Website [www.interreg3c.net](http://www.interreg3c.net) [25 December 2007].



Belarus have participated through TACIS as external partners.<sup>337</sup> Moreover, the Norwegian government has provided a separate budget for project partners from Norway. In the framework of INTERREG IIIB, assistance programmes for the Baltic States were gradually turned into cooperation programmes, with the Nordic Council of Ministers playing an important role in the initiative. One of the leading projects in this regard is the “Baltic Euroregional Network” (BEN), which was launched in 2005. It is coordinated by the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania and aims to enhance cross-border cooperation in the BSR with a special focus on the relationship between the Baltic States, Russia and Belarus.

When looking at this set of initiatives one could come to the conclusion that the EU is, by way of its regional development programmes, very present in Northern Europe, and more specifically, in the BSR. However, what quality does this kind of political interaction have, and what does this specific nature imply for an overall assessment of the EU’s actorness in the region? Approaching a region by way of funding regional development projects carried out by external, or rather, de-central players could be seen as both a blessing and a curse for a region like the BSR.

The EU’s regional approach as it materialises in frameworks like the INTERREG programme always produces winners and losers. In the BSR, the ‘lucky winners’ are mainly regions or micro-regional entities situated in strategically important geopolitical positions. This does not always refer to geographical centeredness, which would render urban areas more relevant than rural ones. It is rather linked to intermediate interests coming from ‘the centre’, i.e. alleged EU interests that determine the level of ambition and commitment. From this point of view, the obvious winners in the BSR were those regions that bordered former communist countries. The losers in turn were and are those that did or do not.<sup>338</sup>

There is yet another reservation to this sort of EU engagement. Institutional arrangements like the INTERREG complex have often been criticised for encouraging competition instead of actual cooperation, and thus, largely falling short of their ambition to enhance positive regional and trans-regional interdependence.<sup>339</sup> Critics have also expressed the concern that the institutional style of INTERREG is likely to benefit the official or public sector as well as the big corporations that hold close contacts with public officials, while excluding smaller “grass root” players systematically because of their limited structural and administrative capabilities and formal incompatibility with the programme requirements.<sup>340</sup> However, these reproaches would have to be studied on thorough empirical grounds before validating them as significant aspects in the debate.

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337 TACIS (Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States) is an institutional restructuring programme launched by the European Commission in 1991, in order to support members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the transitory phase of their national development.

338 See JENSEN Ole B./JØRGENSEN, Ib/NIELSEN Jan: European or national spatial planning? Consequences of EU-policies for spatial planning at national level. The European Spatial Development Perspective and INTERREG IIC. In: NORDRevy, No. 5/1996, pp. 13-19, here p. 14.

339 See JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 372.

340 See HANSEN Jens Christian: No Title. In: NORDRevy 1-2/1996, p. 14.

#### *IV. The EU Neighbourhood Policy*

The idea of establishing a specific policy framework for the European neighbourhood entered the official EU working agenda in early 2002, while the negotiations for the 2004 enlargements were moving towards conclusion. The growing awareness about the geopolitical challenges that the 'Big Bang' EU enlargement was expected to entail built the major source of stimulation for this policy initiative.

In contrast to previous enlargement rounds, this one was different in terms of size and territorial extent. Moreover, its geostrategic implications also added a new factor to the logic of the European project, which therefore entered a crucial stage. The upcoming enlargements were not only expected to bring the EU into direct contact with new areas of strategic interests. It was also becoming clear that the EU borders would eventually be shifted to the very eastern, and probably ultimate, limits of Europe, leaving outside a number of states that are unlikely to ever become candidates for formal membership. While the previous history of European integration had been one of permanent expansion, the EU had now come to the point where enlargement was about drawing lines of ultimate exclusion.

In order to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines across the European continent, the European Commission set out to develop a respective policy framework that would help to "promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union" and to enhance the establishment of a "ring of friends with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and cooperative relations."<sup>341</sup> The ENP addresses all neighbouring countries of the EU that do not have a mid-term perspective for full membership. Therefore, it does not involve current candidate countries such as Turkey and Croatia, and until recently, Romania and Bulgaria, or the Western Balkans. Today, the ENP covers sixteen countries including Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine.

In April 2002, the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) posed a request to the then External Relations Commissioner, Chris Patten, and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Javier Solana, to elaborate ideas and suggestions for the EU policy towards its post-enlargement neighbourhood. The letter resulting from this inquiry was presented at an informal meeting of foreign ministers in September 2002, but did not get much political attention.<sup>342</sup> The Copenhagen European Council first endorsed the political ambition to

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341 See Wider Europe – Neighbourhood. A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. COM(2003) 104 final, 11 March 2003, p. 4.

342 WALLACE William: Looking After the Neighbourhood. Responsibilities for the EU-25. London School of Economics, European Foreign Policy Unit Working Paper, 2003/03. London 2003, p. 2. According to exclusive sources cited by Mureşan, the letter was based on a British initiative with seminal contributions coming from Anna Lindh, then Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs. See MUREŞAN Ioana: The European Neighbourhood Policy. A New Framework for Europeanization? In: MOIA Mihai (ed.): Working Paper of the European Institute of Romania, No. 15:2005. Bucharest 2005, p. 15.

take forward relations with neighbouring countries based on shared political and economic values, [...] to avoid new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union.<sup>343</sup>

It also reaffirmed that enlargement would serve to strengthen relations with Russia and called for enhanced relations with Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the Southern Mediterranean countries to be based on a long term approach promoting reform, sustainable development and trade. At the same time, the Council also emphasised the European perspective offered to the countries of the Western Balkans in the context of the Stabilisation and Association Process.<sup>344</sup> In March 2003, the European Commission then launched its ‘Wider Europe’ Communication, which laid the ground for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) framework, presenting its major rationale and specifying the methodology that the new policy should be based upon. The consideration lying at the core of the ENP initiative was that

over the coming decade and beyond, the Union’s capacity to provide security, stability and sustainable development to its citizens will no longer be distinguishable from its interest in close cooperation with the neighbours. [...] “The EU has a duty, not only towards its citizens and those of the new member states, but also towards its present and future neighbours to ensure continuing social cohesion and economic dynamism. The EU should aim to develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood – a ‘ring of friends’ – with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations.”<sup>345</sup>

This ‘Wider Europe’ Communication was followed by a lively debate among the EU member states. In the course of 2003, drawing on the proposals that resulted from these discussions, a neighbourhood policy instrument was developed, destined to serve the implementation of the ENP in the field of regional cooperation. In view of the changing circumstances following the 2004 enlargements, the Commission decided to revise the array of existing financial instruments for regional development. The Communication “Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument” released in July 2003, addressed the issue of enhanced trans-border cooperation with partner states along external borders of the EU for the programming period of 2007-2013, pointing at the coordination problems caused by the range and variety of financial programmes.<sup>346</sup> The implementation of the new instrument was organised in two phases. During the first transition period (2004-2006), the existing financial instruments (INTERREG, MEDA, TACIS, PHARE) were harmonised through the creation of so-called Neighbourhood Programmes, which were established either as new projects or as adapted succession programmes. To this end, projects involving partners from both EU member states and Russia/Belarus were imposed joint application, project selection and decision making procedures. The Baltic Sea INTERREG IIIB project, for instance, was converted into the “Baltic Sea Region INTERREG IIIB Neighbourhood Programme” as from 2004.<sup>347</sup>

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343 Presidency Conclusions. Copenhagen European Council, 12 and 13 December 2002. DOC 15917/02, 29 January 2003, pt. 22.

344 See *ibid.*, pt. 23-24.

345 Wider Europe – Neighbourhood. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. COM(2003) 104 final, 11 March 2003, p. 3 and 4.

346 See Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument. Communication from the Commission. COM(2003) 393, 1 July 2003.

347 For more details on the Neighbourhood Programme for the Baltic Sea Region, see the official programme website [www.bsrinterreg.net](http://www.bsrinterreg.net) [26 December 2007].

During the second phase of implementation beginning with the next budget cycle (2007-2014), cooperation will be further enhanced with increased funding and harmonized instruments to eventually replace the existing programmes. The main idea behind the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) has been to remove the main obstacle to joint cross-border projects, i.e. the incompatibility of EU funding instruments, and to overcome situations where cooperation projects involving partners from inside and outside the EU would have to apply to different EU funding instruments, namely INTERREG for inside the Union, and e.g. TACIS for external partners such as Russia or Belarus.<sup>348</sup> In recent years, the range and specificity of the existing financial instruments have caused considerable problems, since geographically they often operated in similar areas, but on different sides of the EU border. As a result, each project partner had to follow different rules and conditions for different funding programmes. In many cases, parallel projects in adjacent areas could not cooperate directly because the timing and availability of funds was largely asymmetric. To name an example: the Russian-Finnish ‘Culture-Savo’ project that aimed at fostering the cultural relations between St. Petersburg and South Savo (Finland) received INTERREG funding, but had to wait for one year until the TACIS funding was accredited. In the intervening period, the project partners found it difficult to build up cross-border relations to the extent they wished.<sup>349</sup> By replacing the existing geographical and thematic programmes, this new approach to regional development funding aims not only to simplify administrative procedures but also to provide for genuine cross-border instruments. The joint programmes conducted in the ENPI framework will bring member states and partner states sharing a common border closer together, and thus, increase the effectivity of funding.<sup>350</sup>

In October 2003, the European Commission was mandated to prepare proposals for country-specific ENP Action Plans (APs) to be implemented by the end of June 2004. This practical step was followed by a broader conceptual input, the ENP Strategy Paper published in May 2004.<sup>351</sup> It was intended to complete and elaborate the foundations of the ENP as laid out in the ‘Wider Europe’ Communication. In late 2004, the first seven APs were proposed for Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine. In 2005, the Commission started to prepare further five, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia and Lebanon. In late 2006, the Commission launched another significant communication on the “General approach to enable ENP partner countries to participate in Community agencies and Community pro-

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348 Even though Russia decided not to be part of the overall ENP, and instead to opt for the formally different, but practically similar EU-Russia Common Spaces Partnership, Russian partners will also be eligible for funding in the ENPI framework. To this end, the name of the instrument has been changed from New Neighbourhood Instrument (NNI) into European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

349 See website of INTERACT, Forum for the exchange of experiences in INTERREG Funding [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net) [25 December 2007].

350 For more details on the new financial instrument, see website of the EU on the European Neighbourhood Policy. [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm) [25 December 2007].

351 See European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy Paper. Communication from the Commission. COM(2004) 373, 12 May 2004.

grammes.”<sup>352</sup> The institutional design of the ENP has been criticised for its “optimistic reliance on the well-established model of enlargement” even though the circumstances conditioning the success of the ENP are very different from the pre-accession situation of the Central and Eastern European States.<sup>353</sup> Another structural reference can be identified for the EU ND. The ENP built on the policy model of the EU ND, with particular emphasis on the advantages of the structural openness in the context of regional and sub-regional cooperation.

The Northern Dimension currently provides the only regional framework in which the EU participates with its Eastern partners to address trans-national and cross-border issues. [...] New initiatives to encourage regional cooperation between Russia and the Western NIS [Newly Independent States – Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus] might also be considered. These could draw upon the Northern Dimension concept to take a broader and more inclusive approach to dealing with neighbourhood issues.<sup>354</sup>

Another instance where the EU ND was explicitly mentioned as an exemplary model was the combat of environmental threats in the ENP framework.

Efforts to combat trans-boundary pollution – air, sea, water or land – should be modelled on the collaborative approach taken by the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership.<sup>355</sup>

These structural references notwithstanding, the institutional role the ENP has taken over within the CFSP of the Union has nevertheless derogated the visibility of the North and the Northern agenda. The ENP stands for the general tendency of the EU of rather turning to the East and the unsettled South than to the decent and uncontroversial North. In fact, the challenges emerging from these geographical areas are far more acute, and thus, more essential for the Union to be tackled. The success of the EU’s performance in its disconcerted neighbourhood must be seen as a key factor to determine its international standing as well as its legitimacy and acceptance on the global scene.

### *B. The EU Northern Dimension – A General Overview*

Policy issues specifically addressing the Northern ‘near abroad’ of the Union first entered the EU agenda when the Nordic Countries, and especially Sweden and Finland began to shift their political attention from the European Economic Area (EEA) to the more comprehensive European integration project and their future membership in the EU.<sup>356</sup> However, not even the preparations for the Swedish and the Finnish accession in

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352 General approach to enable ENP partner countries to participate in Community agencies and Community programmes. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. COM(2006) 724, 4 December 2006.

353 See GEBHARD Carmen: Assessing EU Actorness Towards its ‘Near Abroad’. The European Neighbourhood Policy. Conference Paper, presented at the Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge in April 2007. Maastricht/Stockholm 2007, p. 18.

354 Wider Europe – Neighbourhood. A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. COM(2003) 104 final, 11 March 2003, p. 8.

355 *Ibid.*, p. 12. For a critical discussion of the structural references to the EU ND, see VAHL Marius: Models for the European Neighbourhood Policy. The European Economic Area and the Northern Dimension. In: CEPS Working Document No. 218/ February 2005.

356 See CATELLANI Nicola: The EU’s Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations? Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 2.

1995 directly resulted in a distinct policy framework for this part of the continent. The establishment of the EU ND dates back to a Finnish initiative that was first brought up and circulated in late 1996, and officially promoted in 1997 by the then Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen. The formal launch of the official EU policy occurred in November 1998, in the form of a communication by the European Commission.<sup>357</sup> The following chapter provides an introductory outline of the ND, focusing in particular on the content of the statutory documents and the most important steps in the course of the implementation process. This will be followed by a critical discussion of the policy.<sup>358</sup>

### *I. Policy Outline*

The official communication on the EU ND was launched in response to a request posed by the European Council held in Luxembourg in December 1997, which resulted from the above-mentioned Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI). The policy is a common undertaking by the European Commission and the EU Member States together with a group of partners. The Commission plays the leading role in the implementation of the policy. It is responsible for project programming according to the EU ND action plans and for the proposition of appropriate follow up measures. The policy was designed as a regional dimension within the external and cross-border policies of the EU, intending to cover the Baltic Sea Region, the Arctic Sea Region including Iceland and Norway and North West Russia. It seeks to address the specific challenges of these regions, which result from specificities like the harsh climate, the long distances and the extreme disparities in living standard and welfare as well as the ecological sensitivity of the Baltic and the Arctic sea regions. It aims to create security and stability in this part of the continent, putting special emphasis on the enhancement of a safe, clean and accessible environment. Another major aim is to increase cooperation between the EU Member States and the European neighbourhood, most particularly Russia. In fact, the early working documents circulated in the EU ND context showed a clear focus on the EU policy towards Russia. In its conclusions, the European Council of Cardiff (June 1998) emphasised the significance of “the commitment of the EU to help Russian efforts to tackle the problem of spent nuclear fuel and nuclear waste in North-West Russia and notes that such work might be taken forward under the proposed Northern Dimension”<sup>359</sup> as the single priority at this point of the policy development process. The EU ND Communication launched in November 1998 then sought to

- recall the Union’s activities and instruments with regard to the northern dimension;
- set out the challenges facing the region;
- identify areas where the EU could provide added value;
- establish guidelines and operational recommendations for future action.

While highlighting the human and economic potential of the region, the document put again particular emphasis on the significance of the bilateral relations towards Russia.

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357 Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union. Communication from the Commission. COM(1998) 589 final, 25 November 1998.

358 See chapter “The EU Northern Dimension – Showcase for the Swedish-Finnish Divide?”, p. 132-, and chapter “Evaluation: The EU ND Reconsidered” (p. 148-) for a critical reconsideration of the policy in view of the Swedish-Finnish comparison.

359 Presidency Conclusions. Cardiff European Council, 15 and 16 June 1998. SN 150/1/98, pt. 79.

The Northern region is also the Union's only direct geographical link with the Russian Federation and, as such, is important for co-operation between the EU and that country.<sup>360</sup>

The EU ND Communication expressed the clear intent that the EU ND was going to be based upon *existing* activities and policy instruments. The EU ND should by no means lead to the duplication of current structures and policies. The policy tools at hand should be employed in a coordinated way in order to serve the essential objectives of facilitating economic and political cooperation, and to enhance the development of networks in the fields of infrastructure, telecommunications, energy and transport.

The European Union strongly supports regional co-operation across the continent of Europe. In Northern Europe, regional co-operation is promoted by existing regional fora, notably the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Barents Euro Arctic Council (BEAC), in which the European Commission participates, and the Arctic Council. The Northern Dimension ensures that the Union's activities and available instruments continue to focus on this region. [...] It can contribute to the strengthening of the Union's external policies and reinforcement of the positive interdependence between Russia and the Baltic Sea region and the European Union, notably by achieving further synergies and coherence in these policies and actions.<sup>361</sup>

The Commission identified the dramatic disparities in living standards as one of the most pressing challenges to be tackled in the region. Again, the official threat assessment in this context largely focussed on Russia.

Differences in border areas between the Union and the Russian Federation are considerable. In the Russian Federation the infant mortality rate is today approximately six times higher than in neighbouring Finland. Life expectancy at birth is below 57 years in Russia, 77 in Finland. Narrowing down the disparities in living standards is today one of the major challenges for the Northern region.<sup>362</sup>

The communication also pointed at the important issues of energy, transport and natural resources. On the one hand, the region is said to bear enormous potential for further oil and gas exploitation, on the other, the Northern European environment is very vulnerable to progressive ecological degradation. Once again, Russia is mentioned as the primary example given the extent of environmental risks emanating from outdated and inefficient technologies in oil extraction and mining.<sup>363</sup> A similar distribution of priorities is given in the context of nuclear safety where Russia, most particularly its Western North, is perceived as a major source of potential threat.

The treatment of nuclear waste in North West Russia is not at an adequate level of safety. Large quantities of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel are not properly managed or stored, especially on the Kola Peninsula. This is an important problem in which the European Community, Russia, the US, and Norway, are already engaged, for example in the framework of the Barents Euro Arctic Council.<sup>364</sup>

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360 Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union. Communication from the Commission. COM(1998) 589 final, 25 November 1998, pt. 5.

361 Ibid., pt. 9, 10 and 11.

362 Ibid., pt. 13.

363 See ibid., pt. 16 and 17.

364 Ibid., pt. 18.

This quotation does not only show again that the EU ND has a very strong focus on the relationship towards Russia but that it also builds on existing structures both within and outside the Union. References to regional organisations like the Barents Euro Arctic Council add a certain decentralising aspect to the policy since responsibilities appear to be “outsourced”, and thus, shifted away from the supranational level of action. In the context of the economic growing potential, the communication also emphasises the important role of the Baltic States, stressing that the EU highly acknowledges the Baltic efforts in light of their upcoming accession.<sup>365</sup>

The communication touches upon a set of challenges that the EU ND will seek to address, or at least, where it intends to contribute to the development and materialisation of regional counter-measures or long-term solutions. The document mentions illegal trafficking in drugs, nuclear material, illegal migration, criminal activities across borders, money laundering, social, training (managerial and vocational) and health issues, including reinforcement of consumer protection, veterinary and phytosanitary control as some of the most urgent threats that are to be addressed in the near future.<sup>366</sup>

The communication then proceeds to identify areas where the Union could offer an added value; priority is given to:<sup>367</sup>

- the exploitation of natural resources (especially gas and non-energy raw material),
- the development of communications and transport,
- environmental protection,
- health (combat certain diseases)
- nuclear safety,
- trade and commercial cooperation,
- research and technology,
- fighting criminal activities across borders, as well as
- social problems.

The guidelines for the financial implementation of the EU ND strongly emphasise the institutional design of the whole policy undertaking, since it also suggests a structural reliance on existing structures and tools.

Concerning the assistance programmes relevant for the Northern Dimension, the European Community will follow the existing procedures, within existing budgets. Assistance will continue to be provided through existing programmes.<sup>368</sup>

The EU ND is meant to operate through the existing EU financing instruments (TACIS, Phare and INTERREG), aiming to achieve added value of them. International financial institutions (IFI) (e.g. the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Nordic Investment Bank, the Nordic Environment Finance Cooperation, the Nordic Project Fund) and the private sector also play an important role in the financial handling of the policy. This implies in the first place that the policy is not provided with self-standing allocations within the main EC budget.

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365 See *ibid.*, pt. 21.

366 See *ibid.*, pt. 24.

367 See *ibid.*, pt. 27.

368 *Ibid.*, pt. 29.



Eventually, the document recommended that the Commission should develop institutional arrangements to enhance effective coordination of existing policy instruments and that studies should be undertaken and funded by the community in order to develop expertise and assess the potential and needs specific for the region. By way of conclusion, the communication also offered concrete guidelines to frame the implementation process. Special emphasis and detailed instructions were given in the fields of energy, environment and nuclear safety, cross border cooperation, trade, transport and health.

## *II. Policy Implementation and Progression*

Since its formal launch almost one decade ago, the EU ND has gone through an extensive development of implementation and further conceptual modification and innovation. The course of progression has generally been rather erratic with distinguished activist phases followed by long periods of stagnation. Given the numerous stages that the policy framework has gone through, the following overview cannot be exhaustive. It focuses on major achievements in the overall implementation process, and briefly indicates the respective formal consequences.

09/97	Launch of the Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI)
12/98	Vienna European Council adopted formally acknowledged the Finnish initiative
06/99	Cologne European Council adopted “Guidelines for the implementation of the ND” “The implementation and further development of the ND should be done in close consultation with the partners through the existing agreements and within regional bodies such as the CBSS and the BEAC. Council recommends that the relevant bodies should consider how to create synergies between the existing EU-programmes.” <sup>369</sup>
11/99	Commission Communication “Strengthening the ND of European Energy Policy” “Energy has been identified as one of the key sectors in which significant added value of the EU ND is expected. The long term potential for the exploitation of oil, gas and non-energy raw materials (e.g. non-ferrous metal) is huge, but will require substantial improvements in energy and transport infrastructure.” <sup>370</sup>
11/99	1 <sup>st</sup> Ministerial Conference on the EU ND, initiated and hosted by the Finnish EU Presidency; adoption of an “Inventory of current EU ND activities”
12/99	Helsinki European Council, invited the Commission to prepare a ND Action Plan (AP)
06/99	Feira European Council adopted the 1 <sup>st</sup> “Action Plan for the ND in the external and cross-border policies of the EU (2001-2003)” (ND AP)
2001	The EU ND enters the operational phase
03/01	Establishment of the “Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership” (NDEP) by the IFI active in the region (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Nordic Investment Bank, World Bank), intending to signal the endorsement of a new approach in promoting environmental investments, and in order to coordinate efforts to bring solutions to the legacy of environmental damage in the ND Area.. The European Investment Bank joined the NDEP, when their mandate was extended to environmental loans in Russia. <sup>371</sup>

369 Guidelines for the implementation of the ND, adopted by the Council of 31 May 1999. DOC 9034/99.

370 Strengthening the Northern Dimension of European Energy Policy. Communication from the Commission. COM(1999) 164, November 1999.

371 For in-depth information, see the official NDEP website [www.ndep.org](http://www.ndep.org) [23 January 2007].

04/01	2 <sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Conference on the EU ND in Luxembourg hosted by the Swedish Presidency in reaction to a Finnish proposal.
06/01	Göteborg European Council endorsed a “Full Report on ND Policies” taking stock of the activities undertaken to implement the Feira Action Plan and also outlining ideas and proposals for the continuation of the ND initiative.
07/02	launch of a Support Fund for the implementation of the NDEP; objective of the Fund was to support the NDEP by mobilising grant funds to leverage IFI loans. <sup>372</sup>
08/02	3 <sup>rd</sup> Ministerial meeting in Illulisaat/Greenland; discussed guidelines for a 2 <sup>nd</sup> ND AP;
03/03	establishment of the Northern Dimension Research Centre (NORDI) in Lappeenranta
06/03	Commission adopted 2 <sup>nd</sup> Action Plan for the EU ND (2004-2006)
10/03	establishment of the ND Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)
08/04	launch of the Northern Dimension Information System (internet-based) intended to provide a technical means to enable the dissemination of information in the ND context, covering the wide range of activities carried forward under the NDAP;
10/04	1 <sup>st</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), aiming to assess the implementation of the Action Plan, to review progress to date, to identify areas in which a further stimulus would be necessary
11/05	4 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial meeting held in Brussels, approves “Guidelines for the Development of a Political Declaration and a Policy Framework Document for the ND from 2007”
11/06	Council approves “Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension” <sup>373</sup>
01/07	The “New” EU ND enters into force
02/07	Parliamentary Conference on the Northern Dimension

**Table 12: Chronology – the Implementation Process of the EU ND**

### *III. Preliminary Evaluation: What Role for the EU ND?*

The question of whether the EU ND was or still is rather a success story or a failure has recently dominated the academic debate about the policy. If ever the main ambition of the Finnish initiative was to get the “Northern issues” onto the official EU working agenda, then the outcome might certainly be seen as a major achievement. The EU ND has brought *some more* Europeanness to the North, while before, most “southern” Europeans considered it as something extremely remote and peripheral. To some extent, the EU ND can also be regarded as a result of some kind of new Nordic consciousness, some call it “Northernness”<sup>374</sup>, after the fall of the bipolar structure of world politics. “That implies for the EU a dilution of the strict distinction between internal and external policy, given the fact that the external borders of the EU are overlapped by that Northernness.”<sup>375</sup> Indeed, one of the main objectives of the EU ND was to counteract tendencies towards a new European divide at an early stage.<sup>376</sup>

372 For more information about the NDEP Support Fund, see Rules of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund. NDEP 02/50 Rev. 1, 30 November 2005.

373 The relaunch of the EU ND in 2006 will be discussed thoroughly in chapter “Promoting the ‘Finnish Perspective’ – Finland’s EU Presidency 2006”, p. 143-.

374 See JOENNIEMI Pertti: The North meets Europe. On the European Union’s Northern Dimension. Working Paper, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI). Copenhagen 1999, p. 2.

375 DUBOIS Jeroen: The Northern Dimension as Prototype of the Wider Europe Framework Policy. University of Liverpool, Working Paper. Liverpool 2004, p. 4.

376 See STENLUND Peter: Implementation of a Northern Dimension. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): North meets North. Proceedings of the First Northern Research Forum, held in Akureyri and Bessastaðir, Iceland. 4-6 November 2002, pp. 126-129, here p. 126.

Generally, the EU ND was certainly an important policy initiative to foil the general tendency in the continental European perspective of “northernizing” the Nordic member states, i.e. “imbuing the North with connotations of considerable peripherality somewhere at the margins of, if not outside Europe.”<sup>377</sup> From this point of view, the EU ND cannot only be seen as a return of the North onto the European scene but also as a conceptual broadening of the term “North”. However, Joenniemi has a point with the assertion that “making it into the sphere of intra-Union diplomacy” does not yet turn the EU ND into a success story.<sup>378</sup> Some emphasise the fact that the EU ND has, since its creation, been remarkably developed and advanced. Does that automatically imply that it can be regarded as an overall success? In the early years after the formal establishment of the EU ND, its institutional specificities often provoked irritations in both the political and the academic field.

Quite a few observers doubted the utility and the wisdom of such a concept. For many the term was already strange: ‘dimension’ could mean different things, ranging from hard security to environmental and local cooperation.<sup>379</sup>

In the first years of its existence, the EU ND was very much about political declarations and affirmative reports. In the wake of its establishment, many perceived the EU ND as some sort of “open frame” or an “imagined empty space” that still had to be filled with content in terms of concrete projects and concepts for further implementation.<sup>380</sup> Still today, despite several progressions made in the implementation process, the EU ND remains a considerably fuzzy and vague policy concept. The EU ND has never been very substantial in institutional terms since it built almost exclusively on already existing financial and legal instruments. Most significantly, there never was a specific allocation for the policy framework within the general EC budget. Additionally, the geographical coverage of the EU ND appeared quite unclear from the beginning. For some it was mainly limited to the Baltic Sea area, most importantly including Russia and the Baltic States. For others, in turn, it was certainly to include the far up North meaning Iceland as well as the wider Arctic Circle.

Furthermore the ‘real’ objectives appeared hidden: was it just a Finnish initiative proposed mainly in view of this country’s own geographical interest or the starting point for the policy of a larger group of northern countries?<sup>381</sup>

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377 JOENNIEMI Pertti/LEHTI Marko: On the encounter between the Nordic and the northern. Torn Apart but Meeting Again? Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI): Working Paper, 11/2001, p. 6.

378 See JOENNIEMI Pertti: Can Europe Be Told From The North? Tapping into the EU’s Northern Dimension. In: MÖLLER Frank/PEHKONEN Samu (eds): Encountering the North. Cultural Geography, International Relations, Northern Landscapes. Aldershot 2003, pp. 221-260, here p. 223.

379 WESSELS Wolfgang: Introduction. The Northern Dimension as a Challenging Task. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 18-29, here p. 20.

380 See CRONBERG Tarja: Transforming Russia From Military to Peace Economy. London 2003, p. 75.

381 WESSELS Wolfgang: Introduction. The Northern Dimension as a Challenging Task. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 18-29, here p. 20.

Indeed, the question of objectives, and relatedly, of the interests and strategic goals of the single players involved has been ambiguous right away. One aspect that proved to be a major weakness of the EU ND was the fact that the policy did not get equal support among the Member States. Repeated Finnish exhortations about the joint ‘European responsibility’ towards the Northeastern neighbourhood did certainly not change anything about the sceptical attitude of the Southern Member States that feared to be disadvantaged by this shift of political attention to the North.

What certainly contributed to this effect of lacking awareness among the extra-regional Member States was the set of challenges appealed to by the Finnish initiators appeared to be far less acute and urgent than did, for example the complex security political situation on the Balkans. This scepticism and reluctance was not limited to the intergovernmental Member State context. What also hindered a more dynamic development of the policy was the distinct lack of enthusiasm on the side of the European Commission, which could already be told from the final wording of the policy itself, but was also evident in the way the implementation process was administered.<sup>382</sup>

This again leads to another weakness of the EU ND, which is related to the overall standing of the policy on the EU geopolitical working agenda. This can be assessed by way of comparing it to the respective standing of other EU policies, and by relating each and either basic objectives in view of their potential complementarity or competition. In the early years, the EU ND has often been perceived as “just a synonym for a useful policy vis-à-vis Russia.”<sup>383</sup> Critics argued that the EU would rather need a comprehensive policy not only directed towards one part of Russia but towards several geographical and sectoral areas of common concern and interest. The EU ND would then be integrated (!) into a common EU strategy towards Russia, and thus, be incorporated on a more comprehensive framework. This effect of the EU ND being ‘swallowed’ by subsequent or concurrent EU policies with regional impact will be taken up in the next chapter about ‘the EU as a regional (f)actor in Northern Europe.

### *C. Preliminary Conclusions: The EU as a Regional (F)Actor in Northern Europe*

The question of what quality the EU’s (f)actorness has in respect to Northern Europe is certainly difficult to be answered within one single chapter. As pointed out at the beginning of this section, the EU has two different ways of how it can impact on a region like the BSR and other meso-regions in Europe. The two channels are indeed available in every context of European integration: the EU can either perform diffusely, in the sense of a broad normative framework with an alleged “disciplinary” power,<sup>384</sup> or it can operate actively by establishing concrete policy instruments for a certain policy field or indeed, a specific region.

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382 See HAUKKALA Hiski, interview on 22 November 2006. Unpublished personal notes. This aspect will be taken up in chapter “The Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative”, p. 132-, and in chapter “Evaluation: The EU ND Reconsidered”, p. 148-.

383 WESSELS Wolfgang: Introduction. The Northern Dimension as a Challenging Task. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 18-29, here p. 20.

384 MOROFF Holger: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): European Soft Security Policies. The Northern Dimension. Kauhava 2002, pp. 12-36, here p. 17.

The global assessment of the EU's actorness towards its Northern 'outskirts' as it has been conducted in the course of the previous chapters could lead to the conclusion that the first 'diffuse' channel of governance projection is far more pronounced in the Northern European area. This implies not least that the EU engages in European regions with widely differing intensities. On the one hand, it depends on the geostrategic priorities of the Union, on the other, it is also related to the perspective of single member states and their respective power of influencing the EU's overall orientation towards a certain part of the continent. In EU terms, the distribution of financial resources is the first and foremost dependent variable in this regard.<sup>385</sup> The most prominent example in this context is the permanent competition between the Mediterranean States and the Northern and Northeastern states when it comes to the distribution of EU funding. The BSR and more generally, Northern Europe has entered the EU working map only recently. However, when in the course of the 1990s the overall EU ambition for Eastern enlargement emerged, suspicion among the Mediterranean Member States started to grow exponentially. Most particularly Spain and Portugal feared to be sidelined by the EU prospects of actively furthering the post Soviet transformation in the European East and Northeast.

Considering the overall constitution of today's EU approach towards the North including Northwestern Russia and the wider European neighbourhood, the EU ND does not appear to take centre stage, or rather, to form a genuine framework in terms of an overarching policy structure that actually helps to pool the instrumental resources employed in the region. The EU approach towards the North is still rather fragmented, and cannot be said to be focussing on or to be framed by the EU ND. The EU internal standing of the ND has been considerably challenged by the emergence of other EU policies with geopolitical or regional implications, e.g. the bilateral agreements and partnerships the Union upholds with some of the regional actors. The establishment of the ENP in 2004, as well as the conclusion of the Four Spaces agreement reached in 2003, with the central aim of strengthening the bilateral relations with Russia, have led to a certain marginalisation of the EU ND as a stand-alone policy. A similar effect may be related to the 2004 enlargements that virtually shifted the focus of the EU's regional engagement towards the East, and away from the North. Haukkala anticipated the mid-term consequences this step in European integration history might have for the ND:

After enlargement the ND will have only three partners, Iceland, Norway and Russia, of which two will have more privileged avenues for their dealings with the Union, especially in the context of the European Economic Area agreement. This will result in a situation where the Northern Dimension will become centered almost entirely on Russia.<sup>386</sup>

Haukkala pointed out that a Baltic enlargement could also have a certain positive effect on the post enlargement standing of the ND: the accession of the Baltic States would prolongate the EU border with Russia and could thus create an opening and demand for an increase in cross-border interregional cooperation. However, it cannot be denied that

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385 See SCHULZ Günther: *Wie weit liegt Brüssel von der Ostsee entfernt? Die Rolle der Europäischen Union in Nordosteuropa*. In: WELLMANN Christian (ed.): *Kooperation und Konflikt in der Ostseeregion. Gegenwartsfragen* 81. Kiel 1999, pp. 22-36, here p. 23.

386 HAUKKALA Hiski: *Whose Governance? Challenging the Dominant Northern Dimension Discourse*. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): *Northern Veche. Proceedings of the Second Northern Research Forum, held in Veliky Novgorod, Russia. 19-22 September 2002*, pp. 105-107, here pp. 105-106.

the EU enlargement policy, the EU Strategic Partnership with Russia as well as the ENP have opened new policy channels that progressively sidelined the EU ND and to some extent even challenged its very existence on the geopolitical working agenda of the EU. By adopting the EU ND, the EU may be perceived to have shown a certain level of awareness about the specific needs of the Northern European sphere. However, apparently, and in contrast to other policies such as the ENP, in the context of the EU ND the EU did not make full use of its “opportunity to discipline a sphere previously at the fringes of its grasp.”<sup>387</sup> This applies particularly to the attitude of the European Commission, whose commitment has remained somewhat vague and inconsistent throughout the whole implementation process. In the ‘wider Europe’ context of the ENP, the Commission has often been said to be striving to expand its foreign political role given that the conclusion of the enlargement negotiations had considerably narrowed its domain.<sup>388</sup> In contrast, the Commission never seized this chance in the context of the Northern Dimension, and instead, chose to adhere to a reluctant position where much symbolic action was and is accompanied by flowery and uniquely vague and reluctant policy statements.<sup>389</sup>

The following chapter intends to prepare a more in-depth discussion of the EU ND, putting special focus on the role and attitude of Sweden and Finland as two major regional stakeholders, in the specific context of the implementation of the policy. Sweden and Finland are compared alongside a set of factors that appear to account for and impact on the way they structure their politico-strategic choices in the BSR, with special respect to the EU ND.

#### D. *Excursus: Mare Europaeum – Whose Mare Nostrum?*

##### I. *The Contended Sea – A Brief Historical Retrospect*

It is very common to use Latin terminologies in the context of seas and their geopolitical and geo-strategic significance. In recent years, the Baltic Sea has often been labelled the “European Sea” (or *Mare Europaeum*) given the fact that through the 1995 and 2004 enlargements, it has almost become an inland sea of the EU.<sup>390</sup> The notion of *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea), on the other hand, alludes to the Southern European counterpart of the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean. It came into use as an affectionate expression the ancient Romans assigned to it in the course of the expansion of the Roman Empire across the wide coastal area of the Mediterranean and beyond. The

387 See JOENNIEMI Pertti: The Northern Dimension. Allegiance or Revolt? In: HEININEN Lassi/LASSINANTTI Gunnar (eds): Security in the European North. From ‘Hard’ to ‘Soft’. Rovaniemi 1999, pp. 71-82, here p. 72.

388 See MAGEN Amichai: The Shadow of Enlargement. Can the European Neighbourhood Policy Achieve Compliance? Stanford Centre on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law (CDDRL), Working Paper, No. 68/2006, p. 390.

389 The question of lacking commitment by the Commission will be taken up again in chapter “The Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative”, p. 132-, and in chapter “Evaluation: The EU ND Reconsidered”, p. 148-.

390 See e.g. Baltic Study Net. Introduction to the Baltic Summer School Mare Europaeum, Berlin 23 July – 6 August 2006. Website of the Centre for Baltic Sea Region Studies (CEBAST) [www.balticstudies.org](http://www.balticstudies.org) [27 September 2007]. And TASSINARI Fabrizio: Mare Europaeum. BSR Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe. Copenhagen 2004.

question of the Baltic Sea being a *Mare Nostrum* implies, equal to the Roman notion, that there is an immanent struggle for regional domination as well as certain dynamics of expansion and conquest. In the history of Northern Europe, yet another Latin expression has gained considerable importance; the notion of *Dominium Maris Baltici* (Dominion of the Baltic Sea) depicts the struggle for regional domination and supremacy that the various powers around the Baltic Sea have been leading for more than 400 years. The Baltic Sea has traditionally been pivotal to the overall balance of power in Northern Europe.<sup>391</sup> In fact, early modern BSR history was dominated by continuous battles for the maritime control over the sea rim. The table below gives an overview of the circumstances characterising the phases of BSR development.<sup>392</sup>

8200 BC-1100 AD	1100-1500	1600-1939	1939-1989	1989- (current)
pre-historical time	The Hansa Age	Dominium Maris Baltici	Iron Curtain	Revival and growth
1 <sup>st</sup> crossing trade expansion Vikings	Hanseatic League dominates Network between 70 cities around the Baltic and the North Sea	Swedish inland sea (1660) Russian domination (18 <sup>th</sup> ct) Prussian period (19 <sup>th</sup> ct)	bipolar divide system of Nordic balance	Fall of the Berlin Wall democratic development EU enlargement NATO enlargement

**Table 13: Phases in the Historical Development of the BSR**

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Russia struggled for hegemony in the Baltic Sea area. During Sweden's Great Power period in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Baltic Sea was considered a Swedish inland sea connecting the geographical areas occupied by Sweden. The dominant powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century have been Germany and Russia. With the Second World War, the BSR became divided for half a century until the end of the Cold War.<sup>393</sup>

The BSR was, and still is, a contended area among the regional stakeholders. While distant notions of a power related dominion over the region or a struggle for a Baltic *Mare Nostrum* are certainly not neatly applicable to nowadays' circumstances, this bold analogy yet leads us to the issue of the current nature of power balance in the BSR. The following section of the study tries to outline the contemporary significance of a notion like *Mare Nostrum* in the BSR context, focussing in particular on the geo-political and geo-strategic orientation of Sweden and Finland as two major regional stakeholders. It mainly seeks to develop the argument that their foreign, European and regional

391 BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Cooperation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 29.

392 Table generated on the basis of HENRIKSSON Torsten: The Baltic Sea Region. Invest in Sweden. Stockholm 1998, p. 6.

393 For more details, see KIRBY David: Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period: the Baltic World 1492-1772. London 1990. And ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: *Eidora Romani Terminus Imperii*. Cooperation and Integration in Nordic and European Contexts. Jean Monnet Centre, University of Århus, Newsletter 20, 16 December 2004.

orientation, policy formulation and political conduct are strongly influenced by their self-image and their awareness about their geopolitical position.<sup>394</sup>

## *II. What Accounts for Swedish and Finnish Self-Perception?*

Immediately after 1989, Sweden and Finland found themselves in very different geopolitical positions, which decisively influenced the politico-strategic choices the two countries have taken in the years to come. Their individual war experience proved to be one of the major factors determining their individual foreign political self-perception after the breakdown of the bipolar global setting. While Finland just as the Baltic States had been involved in the global block confrontation, Sweden had largely profited from the relative lack of Great Power interest in the European periphery. Because of their fortunate geographical position, the overwhelming majority of Swedes was able to live through the Cold War without noticing that they were involved in a war.

Consequently, the [Swedish] population has not yet realised that they came out on the winning side. If noticed at all, this new confusing state of affairs is often deplored and many almost long back to the bad, but predictable, old days of Cold War confrontation. Because of this isolationist mentality the majority of Swedes, contrary to the Finlanders, have tended to ignore the Baltic character and determinants of their common history.<sup>395</sup>

In the context of block confrontation, Sweden found enough room to pursue its policy of active neutrality, performing as a mediator in various global contexts, such as in Cuba, Northern Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic (GDR).<sup>396</sup> Finland, in turn, had been restricted in foreign political terms since any sort of political activism could have provoked a dangerous reaction on the systemic level. Its geopolitical role during the Cold War was determined by its exposition to Soviet influence.

Finland is the only small state neighbouring the USSR and not allied to the US that managed to avoid Soviet occupation during the Cold War. However, Finland did not occupy a sheltered geopolitical position such as Sweden, and was under almost constant Soviet pressure. Activism under these conditions would have been extremely dangerous. [...] The alternative for Finland, given her [Finland's] geopolitical situation, would have been closer diplomatic ties to the Soviet Union. This would have opened further channels for Soviet pressure, as well as risking the tenuous relations with the West, which Finland desperately sought to maintain, especially in her economic relations.<sup>397</sup>

Finland had been more exposed to the logics of the global system confrontation than any other of the Nordic states. However, in certain contexts, Finland actually appeared to try to take over a more active or even proactive role; probably the most important example in this regard is the strong Finnish support for the Commission on Security and

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394 See chapter "Sweden and Finland as European Actors and Regional Stakeholders", p. 125-.

395 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Nordic Countries in the Baltic Region. In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 26-53, here p. 27.

396 See FÄLLDIN Thorbjörn: Sveriges roll i en spänningsfylld värld. In: *Internationella Studier av Utrikesdepartementet*. Stockholm 1984, pp. 29-35, here p. 29. And JERNECK Magnus: Olof Palme. En internationell propagandist. In: HULDT Bo/MISGELD Klas (eds): *Socialdemokratin och den svenska utrikespolitiken*. Stockholm 1990, p. 112-139.

397 RIES Tomas: Activism and Nonalignment. The Case of Finland. In: DAHL Ann-Sofie/HILLMER Norman (eds): *Activism and (Non)Alignment*. Stockholm 2002, pp. 71-82, here p. 74.



Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) not least by hosting the initial conference in Helsinki in 1975. At a later stage of the Cold War, Finland also played an active part in soothing the relationship between the two blocks. Anyway, this Finnish “activism”, if ever it can be labelled as such, always focussed on aspects of *realpolitik*, meaning issues where Finland had a vital interest, which was mostly to keep the balance between the blocks stable. Generally, Finland tried to maintain as low a foreign political profile as possible, trying to adhere to a truly “neutral” position in all contentious global issues.

If anything, Finland was ‘anti-activist’ during the Cold War, at least if we define activism in terms of moral and ecological wrongs and seeking to redress them through public pressure. In contrast to most notions of activism, she thus avoided moral judgements and sought solutions through consensus and compromise rather than condemnation and pressure.<sup>398</sup>

The Finnish attitude was strongly contrasted by the Swedish foreign policy style during the Cold War, which reached its peak under Prime Minister Olof Palme. Building on the argument of moral greatness and innate normative qualities, he tried to establish Sweden internationally as a moral great power (Swed. *moraliska stormakten*).<sup>399</sup>

Presenting itself as a representative not only of the small states and vulnerable actors of primarily the Third World, but also as an aggressive defender of the United Nations and international law, the main available tool for the protection of the small, Sweden embarked under Social Democratic leadership on countless activist expeditions around the globe.<sup>400</sup>

Palme’s internationalist activism dominated the Swedish international performance in the 1970s and the early 1980s until his assassination in 1986. During the Cold War, the Swedish foreign political profile was characterised by a permanent dichotomy between an active foreign policy attitude and a passive position in security and defence matters.

Swedish political activism on the international scene took on such proportions that it became something of a trademark of the country, just as neutrality had been beforehand. Swedish activism followed two parallel tracks. On the one hand, solidarity with the Third World, resulting in an extensive development aid programme, primarily to other small and non-aligned countries and movements with a preference for socialist solutions to development problems. [...] On the other hand, there existed a pacifist track promoting world peace, which resulted in a number of political initiatives to encourage global disarmament, arms negotiations, as well as Swedish offers to provide mediatory services in regional conflicts around the world.<sup>401</sup>

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398 Ibid., here p. 75.

399 Dahl introduced the concept of moral great power and supremacy (Swed. *moraliska stormakten*) in a critical context although the term had previously been used with a positive connotation in order to justify foreign political action during the bipolar confrontation and promote activist internationalism. NILSSON Ann-Sofie: *Den moraliska stormakten. En studie av socialdemokratins internationella aktivism*. Stockholm 1991, p. 144. And OTTOSSON Sten: *Den (o)moraliska neutraliteten*. Stockholm 2000, p. 12. See also chapter “Sweden and Finland. Typical Small States?”, p. 121-.

400 DAHL Ann-Sofie: Activist Sweden. The Last Defender of Non-Alignment. In: Id./HILLMER Norman (eds): *Activism and (Non)Alignment*. Stockholm 2002, pp. 139-150, here p. 142.

401 DAHL Ann-Sofie: To be or not to be Neutral. Swedish Security Strategy on the Post Cold War Era. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World*. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 184.

Today, the legacy of these years of bold Swedish internationalism still seems to be present in Sweden's own international role perception.<sup>402</sup> Equally, Finland appears to be acting in the old context of intra-Nordic inferiority to Sweden, but also to the old great power Denmark. The notion of Finland being the Nordic *lillebror* (Swed. little brother) and its closest neighbour, Sweden, Finland's *storebror* (Swed. big brother) are still common in every-day talk in Northern Europe.<sup>403</sup>

### III. *Small State Theory – The Conduct of Small States in Foreign Policy*

When analysing Swedish and Finnish self-perception, the aspect of small statehood and small state thinking must be treated as a strong and important marker. Sweden and Finland as well as their Nordic fellow states Denmark, Norway and Iceland could, in quantitative terms, all be termed as small states in the conventional sense. However, telling from each country's foreign political conduct and domestic rhetoric, this factual state 'size' appears not to be always neatly complying with their respective self-perception. As outlined above, this was particularly evident with Swedish foreign politics during the Cold War. Despite its clearly inferior position in respect to the two blocks, Sweden chose an activist and to large extents provocative strategy for its overall foreign political conduct. The following chapter will present a few elements of traditional Small State Theory in order to substantiate the discussion on small statehood in foreign policy. This should eventually allow for a more differentiated evaluation of notions like the Swedish 'perceived greatness' and the Finnish self-image of being the 'forever vulnerable and needy second.'<sup>404</sup>

#### 1. *What Makes a State a 'Small State'?*

Much literature about small states pays considerable attention to the question of how "small states" could be defined. Theorists have employed different measures to define the smallness of states: next to the geographical size of a state or its population, also the degree of influence in international affairs has been taken as a criterion for analysis.<sup>405</sup> However, various attempts of defining state smallness alongside quantitative criteria,

402 For a critical discussion, see OTTOSSON Sten: *Svensk självbild under kalla kriget. En studie av stats- och utrikesministrarnas bild av Sverige 1950-1989*. Stockholm 2003. And JERNECK Magnus: *Olof Palme. En internationell propagandist*. In: HULDT Bo/MISGELD Klas (eds.): *Socialdemokratien och den svenska utrikespolitiken*. Stockholm 1990, pp. 112-139. And GEBHARD Carmen: *Europäische Integration und Neutralität. Österreich und Schweden im Vergleich*. Vienna 2004, pp. 53-57.

403 See for example, FREDERIKSSON Gunnar: *Vet du om att du är stöddig?* *Aftonbladet*, 14 oktober 1996, p. 20. And KLEBERG Olof: *Stolta Finland med i gänget*. In: *Västerbottens Kuriren*, 9 maj 1998, p. 2. And ERIKSEN Knut Einar: *Norge og Norden. Samarbeid og kollisjon*. In: *Atlantehavskomiteén* (ed.): *NATO 50 år. Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk med NATO gjennom 50 år*. Oslo 1999. And BRANDER Richard: *Finland och Sverige i EU. Tio år av medlemskap*. Helsinki 2004. And PETERSEN Leif: *Splittrrad familj drar åt olika hall*. In: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 november 2006, p. 160.

404 Elements of this characterisation of the two states appear in SUOMINEN Tapani/BJÖRNSSON Anders (eds): *Det hotade landet och det skyddade. Sverige och Finland från 1500-talet till våra dagar. Historiska och säkerhetspolitiska betraktelser*. Stockholm 2002.

405 See HEY Jeanne A. K.: *Introducing Small State Foreign Policy*. In: Id. (ed.): *Small States in World Politics. Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour*. Boulder 2003, pp. 1-11, here p. 2. See also VITAL David: *The Inequality of States*. Oxford 1967.

grouping countries by population, geography or any other quantifiable measure, have to remain vague. Taking, for instance, the measurement suggested by Clark and Payne, which classifies states with a population size between 10 and 15 million as “small”, states as different as Belgium and Ecuador would be put into the same category. The enormous variety of states that can be labelled “small” in quantitative terms limits the applicability of a general small state foreign policy theory.<sup>406</sup> Given these methodological problems, it remains difficult to operationalise the smallness of states. In order to eschew rigid specifications and thus, trying to offer a flexible and nevertheless specific definition, Hey made a very pragmatic suggestion:

The research on small states, despite its attempts at formal definitions, is best characterised by and ‘I know one when I see it’ approach to choosing its subject of inquiry. I would argue that this approach improves on rigid definitions that fail to reach an agreed-on group of small states. It also avoids the intellectual squabbles that invariably arise in reaction to any specific definition of a small state. Indeed, the small state literature has been too bogged down in such arguments.<sup>407</sup>

This individualistic approach succeeds in giving a practicable but vague definition. It takes the variety of types of small states into account without refusing the significance of smallness as an analytical point of reference.<sup>408</sup> Normative approaches, on the other hand, suggest definitions that are related to the respective state’s self-perception. The perceptive component of psychological and ideological self-imaging takes centre stage.

The concept of a small state is not least based on the idea of perceptions. That is, if a state’s people and institutions generally perceive themselves to be small, or if other states’ people and institutions perceive that state as small, it shall be so considered.<sup>409</sup>

This approach also reflects the model suggested by Rothstein und Keohane:

A small power is a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of others.<sup>410</sup>

A small power is a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system.<sup>411</sup>

According to these perception-based approaches, states are deemed small not by any objective definition or quantifiable measure, but by their (self)perceived power and role on the international or global scene. It appears important to point out that this perceived or alleged ‘size’ of a state is always defined with reference to other states.

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406 Because of this inconsistency of definitions and typologies, Baehr generally questioned the significance of smallness as an analytical point of reference in foreign policy studies. See BAEHR Peter R.: Small States. A Tool for Analysis. In: World Politics, No. 3/1975, pp. 456-466, here p. 459.

407 HEY Jeanne A. K.: Introducing Small State Foreign Policy. In: Id. (ed.): Small States in World Politics. Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour. London 2003, p. 1-11, hier p. 3.

408 See HEY Jeanne A. K.: Foreign Policy in Dependent States. In: NEACK Laura/HEY Jeanne A. K./HANEY Patrick J. (eds): Foreign Policy Analysis. Continuity and Change in its Second Generation. Englewood Cliffs 1995, pp. 28-47, here p. 30.

409 HEY Jeanne A. K.: Introducing Small State Foreign Policy. In: Id. (ed.): Small States in World Politics. Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour. London 2003, p. 1-11, hier p. 3.

410 ROTHSTEIN Robert: Alliances and Small Powers. New York 1968, p. 29.

411 KEOHANE Robert: Lilliputians’ Dilemmas. Small States in International Politics. In: International Organization, No. 2/1969, pp. 210-296, here p. 296.

Small [is meant] as small in relation to a much bigger and more powerful actor; ‘small’ as ‘smaller than’, which may very well mean ‘bigger than’ a number of other actors in several ways. A small state may well be geographically extensive or economically or otherwise successful or even dominant; although semantically paradoxical, a ‘small’ state may well be considered a middle-sized power – as might be the case with Sweden.<sup>412</sup>

Goetschel claims that the identity emerging from a state’s self-perception about its own size should be regarded as an important, if not as the only direct source of impact, “smallness” can have on state conduct or behaviour. Hence, the self-consciousness of the small state is said to constitute the major independent variable, either in the narrow sense that the state perceives itself as small or relatively minor, and thus, chooses an allegedly typical small state attitude; or the state perceives itself as bigger or equal to others, and thus, seeks to establish action strategies and adopt attitudes that comply with this self-image.<sup>413</sup>

## 2. *Is There a Specific Pattern for Small State Foreign Policy Conduct?*

Next to the question of how to define and conceptualise smallness, Small State Theory mainly focuses on whether, how and to what extent smallness impacts on the conduct and behaviour of a state. Works on this issue have largely emerged in the field of early classic Small State Theory, which based on a quantitative definition of state smallness and therefore, largely coincided with research on weak states and small power. Inspired by the Cold War context, these approaches largely focussed on the role of small states within an alleged hierarchical international system as well as on the relative limitation of their power and capabilities. Hence, small statehood is equated with material inferiority, and thus, has distinct negative connotations.<sup>414</sup> Starting from these presumptions, classic Small State Theory has identified a set of patterns of behaviour that are said to constitute the typical foreign political profile of small states.<sup>415</sup> Summing up the most commonly cited suggestions in this context, one could list the following commonsense assumptions: small states are thought to

- exhibit a low level of participation, presence and activity in world affairs;
- focus on a narrow scope of foreign policy issues;
- limit their foreign political engagement to their immediate geographic arena;
- concentrate on diplomatic and economic alternatives to power-related instruments;

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412 DAHL Ann-Sofie: To be or not to be Neutral. Swedish Security Strategy on the Post Cold War Era. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World*. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 177.

413 See GOETSCHER Laurent: The Foreign and Security Policy Interests of Small States in Today’s Europe. In: Id. (ed.): *Small States Inside and Outside the European Union. Interests and Policies*. Boston/Dordrecht/London 1998, pp. 13-31, here p. 28.

414 An important notion in this context is the so-called “small state dilemma”. Kramer defines it in economic terms, meaning the search for a balance between the unavoidable opening of state economy and society to the global market and the preservation of sovereignty and autonomy as it is suggested by a general democratic understanding. See KRAMER Helmut: *Kleinstaaten-Theorie und Kleinstaaten-Außenpolitik in Europa*. In: WASCHKUHN Arno (ed.): *Kleinstaat. Grundsätzliche und aktuelle Probleme. Symposium des Liechtenstein-Instituts 26-28 September 1991*. Vaduz 1993, pp. 247-259, here p. 249.

415 See HEY Jeanne A. K.: Introducing Small State Foreign Policy. In: Id. (ed.): *Small States in World Politics. Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour*. London 2003, pp. 1-12, here p. 5.

- show a particular focus on internationalist principles, norms and rules, such as international law and other value and morality related ideals;
- secure multinational arrangements whenever possible;<sup>416</sup>
- choose neutral or mediatory positions in times of both conflict and peace;
- uphold strong ties of solidarity with and rely on superpowers in order to gain protection and resources (“bandwagoning”);<sup>417</sup>
- aim to cooperate and avoid conflict with others;
- particular readiness of cooperation, engagement for de-escalation of conflicts;
- spend a disproportionate amount of foreign policy resources and efforts on ensuring physical and political security and survival.

These general assumptions all build on the notion of smallness in the sense of material weakness and endangeredness, and thus, exclusively rely on quantitative criteria. Small states are perceived to be limited in their foreign political resources, and therefore, to constantly seek to maintain their influence as best as they can “in a realist world in which they are at disadvantage.”<sup>418</sup> Starting from the assumption that small states suffer from a permanent power deficit, it is expected that small states strive for foreign political strategies and positions that strengthen their sovereignty in respect to other, bigger states.<sup>419</sup> Because of their relatively weak power base within the international system, small states are expected to act in passive and reactive modes, rather than as proactive agents of international change.<sup>420</sup>

Despite single historical examples that might support part of these assumptions, the establishment of a standard model for small state action strategies in foreign policy appears to remain problematic. The most evident weakness of the above-given criteria is that most of them are not exclusive or unique to small states but could equally become applicable for medium-size or big states. Moreover, as the case of the Nordic group has shown, even the bipolar overlay produced by the Cold War setting did not keep small states from pursuing each a very different foreign political strategy. Again, small states are not unique in this respect, since states *generally* tend to respond differently to similar conditions. Additionally, it needs to be emphasised that since the end of the Cold War, small (and therefore weak) statehood is conditioned by the circumstances of a multipolar world order. ‘Realist’ power in terms of conventional military potential and

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416 See THÜRER Daniel: *Kleinstaat – Außenpolitische Aspekte*. In: WASCHKUHN Arno (ed.): *Kleinstaat. Grundsätzliche und aktuelle Probleme. Liechtenstein Politische Schriften*, Vol. 16. Liechtenstein 1998, pp. 226-227, here p. 226.

417 Dahl defines bandwagoning as follows: “Instead of siding with the temporary ‘great power underdog’, a bandwagoning small state joins the great power on the move, thereby adding further, disproportionate weight to that side. As the strong grow stronger, the weak grow even weaker as a result of small states’ attempts to side with the winner, despite the risk that such behaviour might turn out to be counterproductive for those small states in the long run.” DAHL Ann-Sofie: *To Be or Not to Be Neutral*. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World*. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 183.

418 HEY Jeanne A. K.: *Introducing Small State Foreign Policy*. In: Id. (ed.): *Small States in World Politics. Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour*. London 2003, pp. 1-12, here p. 6.

419 See KATZENSTEIN, Peter J.: *The Culture of National Security. Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York 1996, p. 28.

420 See SUTTON Paul: *Political Aspects*. In: CLARKE Colin/PAYNE Tony (eds): *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*. London 1987, pp. 3-25, here p. 20.

the ability of overplaying international competitors with material qualities have become less important.

The concept of the small state has not lost all its significance but much of it: in the present-day international arena small states have become standard players. Whereas, in the traditional sense of the term, the small state was defined by its weakness – especially with regard to its dependence on powerful states – the voice of the small state has been strengthened under the conditions of present-day international law and international politics.<sup>421</sup>

With the rising level of international integration and growing interdependence, small states defined in quantitative terms gain new opportunities of getting involved and engaged internationally at the same level as other, bigger and allegedly more powerful states.

The notion of small states has lost – if ever it has had one – its relevance thanks to integrated market, political union, and the advantages of global playing fields. It is not the size of a state, which is relevant to its international position. It is its willingness to make institutional commitments and create at home a competitive economic, educational, and cultural environment.<sup>422</sup>

In recent years, many small states have emerged. Møller identified a sheer “proliferation of small states” in Europe, that started right after the Second World War and reached a new peak after the end of the Cold War.

We are currently witnessing the birth of a new generation of small states, formed through the dissolution of empires and multinational states. The Soviet Union fragmented, with the former Union republics opting for statehood, but division has continued beyond that. Yugoslavia has likewise disintegrated, as has Czechoslovakia.<sup>423</sup>

Even today’s EU can be said to be a Union of small states, with 19 out of 27 Member States having less than 11 million inhabitants. The changing circumstances are likely to have a positive long-term impact on the overall position of every single small state in Europe.<sup>424</sup>

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421 See THÜRER Daniel: The Perception of Small States. Myth and Reality. In: GOETSCHER Laurent (ed.): Small States Inside and Outside the European Union. Boston/Dordrecht/London 1998, pp. 33-42, here p. 39.

422 VON DÄNIKEN Franz: Is the Notion of Small State still Relevant? In: GOETSCHER Laurent (ed.): Small States Inside and Outside the European Union. Boston/Dordrecht/London 1998, pp. 43-48, here p. 45.

423 MØLLER Bjørn: Small States, Non-Offensive Defence and Collective Security. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): The National Security of Small States in a Changing World. London 1997, pp. 127-154, here p. 127.

424 For a critical discussion of the issue in the context of EU-internal bargaining, see TALLBERG Jonas: Bargaining Power in the European Council. Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies Report 1:2007, Stockholm 2007.

### 3. *Small States and 'Perceived Greatness' – 'Too Big for Their Boots'?*<sup>425</sup>

Something that appears to have survived the paradigmatic change in world politics at the end of the 1980s is the complex of positive connotations that is commonly ascribed to small states. Early achievements in Small State Theory have significantly contributed to the establishment of some sort of small state myth, a close to romantic concept about small statehood and alleged qualities and specificities of small states operating in international politics. In contrast to the pejorative idea of small state weakness in the anarchy of the international system, the positive myth emphasises the normative qualities small states are likely to develop if exposed to a world dominated by the logic of conventional power and superiority. Leopold Kohr has been among the most fervent advocates of small statehood, or more generally, of compact and easily controllable social entities. Building on his general criticism of neoliberal rationalism and the dogmatic belief in permanent economic progress and stable growth, he maintained that contented smallness would offer exceptional opportunities for a state (or another entity) to develop its normative strength, and to substantiate its moral qualities in terms of virtuousness and integrity. From this perspective, Kohr established the popular phrase of "small is beautiful".<sup>426</sup> The positive connotation of small statehood has been recurrently reproduced in Small State Theory.

In a regulated order [...] small states would be expected, due to their own vulnerability, to enjoy a special legitimacy and credibility to play the role of a critical, moral authority in international relations. They do not have the potential to enforce judgements of decisions, but perhaps because of this, they are specially committed to principles and norms. [...] Small states play a value-promotive role.<sup>427</sup>

The proliferation of this image has involved both the way small states are seen by others and the way small states perceive themselves. The strong normative implications of this myth bring us back to the issue of psychological and ideological self-imaging of states. Just as a state's awareness about the negative effects of its smallness (in terms of weakness and vulnerability) is perceived to elicit certain patterns of behaviour in the state's foreign policy (strategies of power compensation), also a positive self-image must be expected to influence a state's foreign political conduct. How can this argument be related to the phenomenon of 'perceived greatness'?

The positive myth of small statehood does not seek to deny the factual smallness of a state, it rather aims to emphasise the advantages of small statehood. Perceived greatness in turn could be said to ignore factual smallness, which remains a 'fact' either way. Developing this line of thought further in order to come to a conclusion about the effects a positive self-awareness could have, one could assume that a small state pursuing typical, in the conventional sense of power politics, 'big state' action strategies could, to a major extent be supported in its course and orientation when becoming aware of the wide-ranging positive connotation of its size and the strategic advantage

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425 Wiberg introduced this phrase while characterising Swedish foreign policy conduct in the beginning of the 20th century. See WIBERG Håkan: Emanuel Adler, Michael Barnett and Anomalous Northerners. In: *Cooperation and Conflict* 3/2000, pp. 289-298, here p. 295.

426 KOHR Leopold: *Die überentwickelten Nationen*. Salzburg/Vienna 2003, p. 33.

427 GOETSCHER Laurent: The Foreign and Security Policy Interests of Small States in Today's Europe. In: Id. (ed.): *Small States Inside and Outside the European Union. Interests and Policies*. Boston/Dordrecht/London 1998, pp. 13-31, here p. 25-26.

that might result from this. The positive image of small states could bring them to the assumption that their normative or moral superiority liberates them from the logic of a power-related hierarchy or balance. The internalised awareness about their qualities and reputation could stimulate them to assume proactive positions. In a polycentric and, in conventional terms, largely safe environment (e.g. post Cold War Europe) small states are additionally liberated from the permanent pressure of acute external threat. This opens additional potential for small states to overcome their position as 'reactive inferiors.' In an international security environment where conventional threat is largely absent and the notion of a 'small state' has distinctly positive connotations 'small' states find an ideal surrounding for the pursuance of alternative or 'atypical' action strategies. With reference to the above list of small state patterns in foreign policy, this could be

- increased level of participation and activity in world affairs;
- foreign political engagement in remote regions;
- assuming the habit of selective cooperation with strong tendencies of *Alleingang*;
- abstention from establishing any close or committal relationship with a superpower;
- proactive positioning in cases of international confrontation (e.g. diplomatic);
- cut down on foreign policy resources that serve to ensure physical survival.

The widened spectrum of possibilities produces a differentiated picture of 'small states in Europe', not least partly derogating the purported effect of small state solidarity. This implies that in the event of enhanced international exposedness, e.g. through a proactive move promoted at the EU level, mutual suspicion and competitive confrontation among the group of small states become ever more likely, while shared weaknesses, like increased vulnerability and an augmented need to pool capabilities against an alleged predominant actor, cease to have a unifying effect.

#### 4. Sweden and Finland – Typical Small States?

In the conventional sense, i.e. telling from the size of their population, Sweden and Finland can both be regarded as 'small' states. Concerning their foreign political action pattern, the two Nordics show only little similarities. In the Cold War context, the Finnish external profile was largely determined and paralysed by the overlay of the permanent Soviet threat. Sweden in turn used the situation of lucky isolation in order to assume a largely activist role in international relations.<sup>428</sup> In terms of the classical assumptions of Small State Theory, Sweden's foreign political conduct during the Cold War must be categorised as largely atypical. Despite its material exposedness as a factually small state in a situation of bipolar superpower confrontation, Sweden stepped out of the shadow of mutual deterrence and pursued a proactive course in international politics, most significantly, with a unique air of self-confidence and pride. The notion of a 'moral superpower' (Swed. *moraliska stormakten*)<sup>429</sup> probably describes this attitude best. The perceived greatness underlying this behaviour implied that the 'typical' concerns of small states in world politics did not have a major influence on Sweden's

428 See BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Cooperation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 27.

429 See NILSSON Ann-Sofie: *Den moraliska stormakten. En studie av socialdemokratins internationella aktivism*. Stockholm 1991. And OTTOSSON Sten: *Den (o)moraliska neutraliteten*. Stockholm 2000.



choices in global diplomacy.<sup>430</sup> In other words, Sweden challenged the commonly held view that “the powerful do as they will, and the weak do as they must.”<sup>431</sup> After the end of the Cold War, Sweden again assumed an ‘atypical’ attitude in the sense that it did not seek to grasp the newly emerging opportunities that the multipolar world order had on offer. Finland in turn “rushed to embrace the West,”<sup>432</sup> seizing the chance of ending its unloved state of conditioned isolation. After having already followed the logic of small statehood in power politics in the Cold War context, Finland also adhered to the (then) ‘typical’ action pattern once it had been liberated from past dependencies.<sup>433</sup> Finland has sought to achieve a maximum of integratedness, and due to the absence of direct threat, also set out to assume a more proactive role in international politics. In contrast to the Swedish attitude during the Cold War, Finland has largely abstained from the promotion of any sort of ‘small state legacy’ for Europe. This turns Finland also into an atypical Nordic since the alleged moral progressiveness and superiority associated with this image still builds an important element in the Nordic self-image. Nordic superiority is also persistent in the outside perception; still today, Nordicism is largely associated with a group of “small, peace-loving and democratic countries”<sup>434</sup> whose list of merits in international politics is long.<sup>435</sup>

Scandinavia [...] as a group of militarily weak, economically dependent, small states deliberately act as ‘norm entrepreneurs’ in global eco-politics, conflict resolution, and the provision of aid. Scandinavia’s role in world politics today is to provide alternative models of engagement [that might be referred to as] the exercise of ‘social power.’<sup>436</sup>

Sweden just as Norway, and to a large extent, also Iceland has maintained this important feature in its own foreign and geopolitical self-awareness. However, the way Sweden avails itself of these specificities as strategic tools for the creation and maintenance of a distinctive foreign political profile has changed. Sweden has largely withdrawn from the global scene, with its involvement in international crisis management operations building an important exception. Sweden does no longer promote its normative convictions in a missionary way. Sweden rather tries to maintain an international profile as low as possible, and focuses its foreign political action largely on its Baltic surrounding. However, Sweden’s great power pride and perceived greatness persists.

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430 See FÄLLDIN Thorbjörn: *Sveriges roll i en spänningsfylld värld*. In: *Internationella Studier av Utrikesdepartementet*. Stockholm 1984, pp. 29-35, here p. 29.

431 INGEBRITSEN Christine: Norm Entrepreneurs. Scandinavia’s Role in World Politics. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 11/2002, pp. 11-23, here p. 11.

432 DAHL Ann-Sofie: To be or not to be Neutral. Swedish Security Strategy on the Post Cold War Era. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World*. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 191.

433 See DUBOIS Jeroen: *The Northern Dimension as Prototype of the Wider Europe Framework Policy*. University of Liverpool, Working Paper. Liverpool 2004, p. 3.

434 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Nordic Countries in the Baltic Region. In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 26-53, here p. 28.

435 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 367.

436 INGEBRITSEN Christine: Norm Entrepreneurs. Scandinavia’s Role in World Politics. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 11/2002, pp. 11-23, here p. 11.

In their core, Swedes still see themselves as a traditionally great power that should have influence on the European scene.<sup>437</sup>

Paradoxically, Sweden also employs the myth or cliché of small state integrity as an essential part of its current action strategy. Sweden still tries to profit politically from its own alleged marginality and weakness, trying to maintain its reputation as the offenceless and “boring backwater of Europe,”<sup>438</sup> and thereby, to gain leeway and legitimation for its exceptionalist stance in questions of further integrative deepening on the European scale.<sup>439</sup>

##### 5. *Small States, Great Powers and Leadership in the Nordic Family*

During the Cold War, Swedish self-perception appeared to be dominated by the traditional awareness of being a regional leader in Northern Europe with Stockholm building some sort of regional centre of gravity. Østergård found an amusing albeit arguable evidence for the self-proclaimed Swedish supremacy in the Nordic sphere.

The Scandinavianist vision was materialised in a somewhat perverted form in the shape of a museum in Stockholm bearing the auspicious name ‘*Nordiska museet*’ (Nordic Museum), though the imposing name conceals little more than a Swedish local-heritage museum with a smattering of Swedish royalism and anti-Danish sentiment thrown in. In the entrance hall, the visitor is confronted by an enormous and intimidating granite statue of Gustav Vasa, the call to ‘*Varer Svenska!*’ [sic!] (Be Swedish!) carved unambiguously into its base.<sup>440</sup>

While performing its own ‘felt’ or ‘perceived’ greatness, Sweden happened to be a strong supplier of what has been labelled ‘Nordic supremacy’. This self-produced image or cliché has been promoted eagerly and successfully in the context of the Cold War setting, and was gradually accepted, if not taken for granted on the international and global scene. Nordicism has been, and still often is, related to normative qualities such as virtue, righteousness or more generally, an inherent moral consciousness.<sup>441</sup> Analysts have found different ways to evaluate the significance of this value-laden political label.

Nordism’ is the label of this uniqueness, of the ‘superiority’ of *Norden*, which is enshrined in a historical, cultural, linguistic and even religious commonality.<sup>442</sup>

In essence Nordicity is part and parcel of cultural modernity that merged with certain orientations of a political kind. In terms of cultural radicalism it amounted to a specific

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437 BONNÉN Preben/SØSTED Michael: The Origin, Development and Perspectives of Nordic Cooperation in a New and Enlarged European Union. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, Nr. 1/2003, pp. 19-32, here p. 27.

438 CAVE Andrew: Finding a Role in an Enlarged EU. In: *Central Europe Review*, Nr. 20. 22 May 2000. Online publication [www.ce-review.org](http://www.ce-review.org) [26 November 2007].

439 For a more abstract analysis of this distinctive Swedish action strategy, see chapter “The BSR as an Auto-Dynamic Unit Within the Wider Unit Europe”, p. 203-.

440 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: The Nordic Countries in the Baltic Region. In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 26-53, here p. 31.

441 See LEHTI Marko: Eastern or Western, New or False? In: TASSINARI Fabrizio/JOENNIEMI Pertti/JAKOBSEN Uffe (eds): *Wider Europe*. Copenhagen 2006, pp. 69-88, here p. 73.

442 TASSINARI Fabrizio: *Mare Europaeum*. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from Post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe. Copenhagen 2004, p. 115.

Nordic ideology, which then paved the way for a societal development of its own kind during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>443</sup>

A cultural modernism merged with political conceptualisations and boiled down, under the heading of cultural radicalism, into an autonomous ideological phenomenon.<sup>444</sup>

In the context of European integration, this distinct ideological formation became also known for its inherent reluctance and symptomatic retentiveness when it came to the cession of sovereignty or parts of the exceptionalist stance in international relations. Over decades, the Nordic attitude was known as a 'third way', in both the ideological sense and in terms of political practice on the global scene. What has less often been considered in analyses about Nordic uniqueness is the analytical factor of intra-Nordic relationships and of the distribution of roles within the Nordic family.<sup>445</sup> Looking further back into Nordic history, Iceland naturally had a more marginal position in both the development and international promotion of Nordicism, and with respect to the potential intra-Nordic competition or rivalry. Between Norway and Sweden, the close historical links and the geographical position have traditionally been decisive for their bilateral relationship. However, in recent years, their zones of geopolitical interest have not overlapped, given the strong Atlantic and Arctic orientation of Norway.<sup>446</sup> The rapport between Sweden and Finland cannot be said to have ever borne an openly competitive air as did, for instance, the Swedish-Danish relationship. While over the decades, Sweden and Denmark rather competed on the level of Great Powers rivalling for regional supremacy, the Swedish-Finnish relationship has mostly been one between similar yet unequal neighbours. Only recently, after Finland had been liberated from past dependencies, and both Sweden and Finland had approached full membership in the EU, a more competitive relationship developed between them, with the Brussels scene becoming a major arena for soft rivalry and indirect ousting among them.

As all Nordic countries rushed to the support of their tiny Baltic neighbours, a friendly rivalry developed between in particular the Swedish and Danish governments, with Finland moving in more quietly. All were equally determined to do their utmost to help, by use of their different doctrines and alignments.<sup>447</sup>

The Nordic countries tried to occupy a pivotal role in the process of EC/EU 'approach-building' towards its Northern neighbourhood. The prospect of actively shaping the priorities of the enlarging EU was seen as an opportunity to, on the one hand, maximize their influence and further their national interests, and on the other, to offer themselves as a political interface between the EU and Russia or as a contact point for either side.

Between 1991 and 1993, the Nordic countries redirected their foreign policies towards their neighbouring areas. The flourishing of Nordic-sponsored initiatives at regional level and the

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443 JOENNIEMI Pertti: Norden as a Post-Nationalist Construction. In: Id. (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 181-234, here p. 205.

444 ØSTERGÅRD Uffe: *Norden – europæisk eller nordisk?* In: *Den jyske Historiker*, Nr. 69-70/1994, pp. 7-38, here p. 15.

445 PETERSEN Leif: *Splittrad familj drar åt olika hall*. In: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 november 2006, p. 160.

446 See CATELLANI Nicola: *The EU's Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations?* Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 5.

447 DAHL Ann-Sofie: *Activist Sweden. The Last Defender of Non-Alignment*. In: Id./HILLMER Norman (eds): *Activism and (Non)Alignment*. Stockholm 2002, pp. 139-150, here p. 147.

substantial financial resources invested by the Nordic governments in the eastern part of the Baltic Sea area should be interpreted as the most evident sign of a rush to exploit the political and economic opportunities opened up by the [...] 'return' of the Baltic states.<sup>448</sup>

The distribution of geostrategic and political roles in this intra-Nordic competition was very clear, since it could partly be told from the traditional self-perception and regional orientation of each of the five Nordics. This became evident with the focus each of them put in the field of bilateral aid transfer, where e.g. Finland showed a strong affiliation to Estonia as its main traditional partner in the region. The efforts and interests of Norway (and naturally, also of Iceland) had always been more devoted to the far up North and the Arctic sphere, while for Sweden, the newly emerging opportunities for cooperative interaction in the BSR had a very strong geostrategic significance.<sup>449</sup>

In other respects, the competitive game was influenced or determined by concurrent changes in the general political situation. This was particularly true for the Danish case since through the unexpected rejection of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in late 1992, the country turned from the best-positioned player in the regional 'game' into an unfortunate outsider. In fact, after this event, the Danish government started to withdraw its early regionalist activism and assumed a more passive role in the process.<sup>450</sup>

This dealt a decisive blow to Denmark's ambitions to play a pivotal role in the Northern neighbourhood of the EU and led its political elite and foreign-policy makers to adopt a less assertive stance at both regional and EU level. There was a return in a sense to the pre-1980s attitude, marked by a low profile and pragmatism.<sup>451</sup>

Hence, since Denmark was forced out of the game, and Norway and Iceland clearly orientated themselves towards other spheres of geostrategic interest, which is, the Arctic Circle, the scene was largely left to Sweden and Finland.

#### *IV. Sweden and Finland as European Actors and Regional Stakeholders*

The following comparative chapters seek to identify some of the major differences between the two 'similar but unequal' Nordics, in order to eventually position them in the context of the implementation of the EU Northern Dimension. Before the study returns to the issue of policy creation and diffusion and the discussion of the intra-Nordic standing and reception of the EU ND, Sweden and Finland are compared in respect to the following two aspects:

- their conduct within the EU and in the broader context of European integration;
- their profile as regional stakeholders in the BSR, with special focus on their behaviour towards the Baltic States and their performance and orientation in subregional cooperation.

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448 CATELLANI Nicola: The EU's Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations? *Utrikespolitiska Institutet*, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 3.

449 See PETERSEN Leif: *Splittrad familj drar åt olika hall*. In: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 november 2006, p. 160.

450 See CATELLANI Nicola: The EU's Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations? *Utrikespolitiska Institutet*, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, pp. 3-5.

451 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

### 1. Sweden, Finland, European Integration and the EU

Before entering the EU in 1995, both Sweden and Finland had historically resisted any sort of regional cooperation structure with supranational elements. Besides a general reluctance towards institutionalised commitments, it was mostly security political considerations that had kept Sweden and Finland from applying to join the EC. Only in the late 1990s, the two Nordics started to open themselves towards the broader process of European integration. The global political changes required a thorough reassessment of both their foreign political and their regional policy orientation.

The opening provided by the disintegration of the Cold War system of East-West alliances made it possible for neutral states, Finland and Sweden, to conceive of joining the European Community. The traditional obstacle to joining the EC, “What will Moscow think?”, was no longer significant.<sup>452</sup>

Despite their coincidental accession, once having become full members, Sweden and Finland developed very different member state profiles. Ingebritsen identified a scale of willingness for political integration among the Nordic five, where Finland ranged on first position as the most supportive candidate for further deepening in political fields of integration.<sup>453</sup> The Swedish motivation for reassessing its relationship towards the EC in the early 1990s had a very strong economic background. Starting from 1991, the Swedish economy had suffered a dramatic breakdown, which in the years to come was expected to cause major infringements on the Swedish welfare system. For Finland, on the other hand, approaching the full membership option had a far ranging ideological, political and most importantly, also a security political significance. After Finland had liberated herself from the Soviet link, the first and foremost strategic aim became to gain distance from the past by distinctly turning to the West and seeking Western integration in the best visible way. What appeared essential on the Finnish side did in turn represent a major obstacle for Sweden. The idea of committing themselves to a supranational framework had been an unloved prospect for most Swedes at that time. The accession and full integration into the EC/EU was seen as a practical necessity that would help to tackle the domestic difficulties but ‘unfortunately’, would also entail major impacts on Swedish sovereignty. A strong marker for these specific circumstances in the Swedish case was the harsh lines that emerged between the pro- and anti-EC coalitions on the domestic level. In Sweden, it was the conservative party (*moderata samlingspartiet/moderaterna*), which set out to relativise the anti-EC atmosphere in the early 1990s. In November 1991, the then Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt promoted Sweden as being on the point of turning from “a reluctant into an enthusiastic European.” Speaking to a selected audience of European Commission officials, he renounced much of Sweden’s past scepticism towards European integration and claimed that Sweden was about to develop and pursue a clear European identity.<sup>454</sup>

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452 INGEBRITSEN Christine: *The Nordic States and European Unity*. Cornell 1998, p. 10.

453 She positioned Denmark as second, followed by Sweden, Norway and Iceland as the most hostile towards political integration among the Nordic five. See INGEBRITSEN Christine: *The Nordic States and European Unity*. Cornell 1998, p. 14.

454 BILDT Carl, cited by AF MALMBORG Mikael: *Sweden in the EU*. In: HULDT Bo/TIILIKAINEN Teija/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/HELKAMA-RÄGÅRD Anna (eds): *Finnish and Swedish Security. Comparing National Policies*. Stockholm 2001, pp. 38-59, here p. 41.

The political debate preceding the EU accession was then, however, marked by fervent discussions, in the course of which a series of odd, and in respect to Sweden's future fellow members, awkward rhetoric faux pas were made by high rank politicians.

The early debate provides an embarrassing number of cases where the community is identified with 'conservatives', 'colonialists', 'capitalists' and 'catholics', or a 'supposedly undesirable bedfellow for upright Swedes'.<sup>455</sup>

Still today, more than ten years after the EU accession, the so called "no"-parties (Swed. *nej-partier*) form an important element in the inner-Swedish debate, with the question of whether being generally in favour or hostile towards Swedish EU-membership still building the decisive dividing line running across the domestic political landscape.<sup>456</sup> In Finland, the public debate about joining the Union happened to be far less controversial. This was mainly because Finland had a specific security political objective which to achieve was perceived to be largely dependent upon Finnish membership in the EC. In the first place, the Finns viewed European integration as a way to "return to Europe" and a "liberation from past dependencies." Most specifically, they perceived formal EC membership as a means of securing their protracted border with Russia.<sup>457</sup> Herolf found a charming way to characterise the Swedish attitude about European integration

Swedish views of the future of Europe tend to be more intergovernmental than supranational. [...] Swedish policy ambitions are those of a small state that has not hesitated on occasions to take its own road.<sup>458</sup>

What does this 'minor' matter entail for Swedish membership in a Union that is per definitionem supranational? Bo Huldt identified three factors lying at the basis of Swedish reluctance. First, it is the argument of neutrality, second, a distinct propensity to maintain its full sovereignty, and third, it is "a rather nebulous category of arguments which concern Swedish 'identity' and a general aversion to 'other identities'".<sup>459</sup> Ten years after the EU accession, the Swedish population is still among the most euro-sceptical in the Union. Its Nordic fellow Finland in turn has gained the reputation of being the Nordic 'model pupil'.<sup>460</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Finnish gains in the context of the European Monetary Union (EMU) and the implementation of the single currency were not very much appreciated by 'big brother' Sweden. However, after a short uproar following the Swedish referendum, the Swedes returned to reluctant self-sufficiency.

Immediately after the referendum rejecting the euro, tensions were high between those who voted for and against joining the single currency. Now the issue is hardly debated at all; the fact that the Euro's two most important countries – France and Germany – have not observed the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact means that for most people joining the

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455 HULDT Bo: Sweden and European Community-building 1945-92. In: HARDEN Sheila (ed.): Neutral States and the EC. London 1994, pp. 104-143, here pp. 111-112.

456 See GEBHARD Carmen: *Europäische Integration und Neutralität. Österreich und Schweden im Vergleich. Diplomarbeit* Vienna 2004, p. 167.

457 See INGEBRITSEN Christine: The Nordic States and European Unity. Cornell 1998, p. 16.

458 HEROLF Gunilla: Views from the capitals. Swedes at last uniting on the EU – they want to reform it. In: Europe's World, Autumn 2005. Online available at [www.europesworld.org](http://www.europesworld.org) [23 August 2007].

459 HULDT Bo: Sweden and European Community-building 1945-92. In: HARDEN Sheila (ed.): Neutral States and the EC. London 1994, pp. 104-143, here pp. 111-112.

460 See e.g. BRANDER Richard: *Bästa elev i klassen*. In: Id. (ed.): *Finland och Sverige i EU. Tio år av medlemskap*. Helsinki 2004, pp. 48-53.

eurozone is out of the question. The fact that the Swedish economy is doing so well outside the euro is another persuasive factor.<sup>461</sup>

For Finland in turn, joining the Monetary Union has never been a very controversial question. Finland generally pursued a more pragmatic course, trying to make the best out of its membership without taking any major risk of violating the principle of solidarity and loyalty. An issue where both Finland and Sweden actually adhered to a similar course was enlargement.<sup>462</sup> Both were fervent supporters of the ‘Big Bang’ enlargement, and in contrast to many Central European countries, assumed a rather undogmatic position in the context of the debate on Turkey. However, once again, both Nordics had very different ideas about how the pre-enlargement process of the CEECs and the Baltic States should be developed in detail,<sup>463</sup> and they had different expectations concerning a Turkish membership.

Generally, Finland proved to have much better records in its membership conduct while the permanent Swedish exceptionalism often seemed inappropriate and counterproductive, evermore provoking scepticism and suspicion among the other 23/25. This applies largely for the Swedish foreign political style assumed during the pre-accession process of the Baltic States where Sweden’s attempts of taking over a leading role often happened to become self-defeating and supportive of the impression that Swedish rhetorics were often “too big for its boots”.<sup>464</sup> Before turning to the “major Swedish-Finnish divide” in the question of the EU ND, the following chapter will give a brief overview of the two Nordics’ approach towards the BSR.<sup>465</sup>

## 2. *Sweden, Finland and the BSR*

After 1989, the BSR constituted something of a “power vacuum,” with Germany being blocked because of internal difficulties and Russia being “out of the game” for the first decade following the decline of the Soviet empire.<sup>466</sup> Sweden and Finland had to reposition themselves within the region by first of all, compensating for the void that emerged in the Nordic North (old *Norden*) after it had lost its middle way status.<sup>467</sup>

For the two Nordic states, thinking the BSR in terms of cooperation instead of division and block confrontation was a wholly new experience. During the Cold War, trade as

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461 HEROLF Gunilla: Views from the capitals. Swedes at last uniting on the EU – they want to reform it. In: Europe’s World, Autumn 2005. Online publication available at [www.europesworld.org](http://www.europesworld.org) [23 August 2007].

462 HEROLF Gunilla: The Swedish Approach. Constructive Competition for a Common Goal. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 141-160, here 147.

463 See BRANDER Richard: *Lågvaattenmärke i relationerna*. In: Id. (ed.): *Finland och Sverige i EU. Tio år av medlemskap*. Helsinki 2004, pp. 67-85, here p. 76.

464 Wiberg introduced this phrase while characterising Swedish foreign policy conduct in the beginning of the 20th century. See WIBERG Håkan: Emanuel Adler, Michael Barnett and Anomalous Northerners. In: *Cooperation and Conflict* 3/2000, pp. 289-298, here p. 295.

465 BRANDER Richard: *Lågvaattenmärke i relationerna*, here p. 80.

466 See SWIECICKI Jakub: *Östersjön. Säkerhet och samarbete*. In: The Swedish Institute of International Affairs/*Utrikespolitiska Institutet* (ed.): *Världspolitikens Dagsfrågor* Nr. 12/1996. Stockholm 1996, p. 11.

467 See MUSIAL Kazimierz: Education, Research and the Baltic Sea Region-building. In: Id. (ed.): *Approaching Knowledge Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. Gdańsk/Berlin 2002, pp. 42-60, here p. 48.

well as political and human relations across the Baltic Sea rim had not deserved the name of a region; cooperative relationships had been limited to the Nordic sphere, consisting of Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland. However, soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, proactive cooperation between the Nordic States and the newly emerged democracies on “the other side” of the sea started to develop, putting forth an immense variety of cooperative structures and projects of cross-border collaboration. Sweden and Finland as the two major stakeholders in the BSR found very different ways to adapt their regional orientation to the new geopolitical setting and the circumstances of newly emerging openness and cooperativeness across old dividing lines. In the context of the bipolar setting, Sweden had mainly focussed on global engagement, contributing to and interfering in far off contexts such as the Korean dispute or the relationship between Cuba and the US.<sup>468</sup>

For Sweden, the end of the Cold War brought some blessings, but it also brought hitherto relatively unknown strategic problems. On the one hand, Baltic freedom from superpower oppression and the reestablishment of three independent states along the Swedish borders was good news for the community of small states and for democracy worldwide. Sweden suddenly no longer had one dominant neighbour to the east and the south, but faced a whole number of friendly, independent states, some of which were small and vulnerable, much more so than Sweden itself, while another had doubled in size overnight.<sup>469</sup>

The end of the Cold War era pushed Sweden towards a more openly activist attitude in its adjacent geographic area. Evidence for a change in its respective political orientation gradually began to take place in the early 1990s, when Sweden started to invest a considerable amount of political engagement, and not least, money, in order to help Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in a neighbourly effort, trying to safeguard and support their fragile independence and sovereignty. However, the closer the prospect of Baltic EU membership moved, the more it became clear that these efforts were not mere courtesy. In the years preceding the 2004 enlargements, Sweden sought eagerly to establish itself as an advocate for its Baltic neighbours, as many of its major strategic interests appeared to be touched by the Baltic transformation process. Notwithstanding the importance of the Balkans, the main arena for the Swedish pursuit of strengthening the transatlantic link, as well as for its foreign policy activism in the post Cold War era has been the BSR. As the centre of policy shifted from the Developing World to Europe in the early 1990s, the focus of Swedish security was placed on developments in the own neighbourhood, with special attention paid to the independence and survival of the three small and weak Baltic countries that had newly been freed from Soviet occupation.<sup>470</sup>

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468 See JERNECK Magnus: *Olof Palme. En internationell propagandist*. In: HULDT Bo/MISGELD Klas (eds.): *Socialdemokratin och den svenska utrikespolitiken*. Stockholm 1990, pp. 112-139, here p. 119.

469 DAHL Ann-Sofie: To be or not to be Neutral. Swedish Security Strategy on the Post Cold War Era. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World*. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 188.

470 DAHL Ann-Sofie: Activist Sweden. The Last Defender of Non-Alignment. In: Id./HILLMER Norman (eds): *Activism and (Non)Alignment*. Stockholm 2002, pp. 139-150, here p. 146.



This Swedish focus on the geographically adjacent areas was not entirely new. The issue of Sweden's geostrategic orientation had always been a question of party politics. While the Conservatives had always put a special focus on the BSR, the Social Democrats rather focussed on bilateral cooperation far outside the near neighbourhood. Already prior to Baltic independence, Swedish Conservatives and Liberals had for months organised public rallies around the country to support the Baltic cause. Under the Bildt cabinet, as from 1991, the BSR became the obvious centre of Swedish security policy, with the Prime Minister himself being personally involved in negotiations for the Soviet military withdrawal from Baltic territory.

While Swedish Social Democrats in many ways were newcomers to the Baltic Sea region, it was quickly incorporated into their foreign and security policies when they again turned to power in 1994. The Bildt government brought the region to its central position in Swedish policy, but it has since stayed in that place, without regard to the ideological shadings of the party or parties of power. Prime Minister Persson has shown a very special interest in promoting stability in the region, demonstrating from his first days in office that this was indeed an issue close to his heart – and causing multiple diplomatic hiccups at the Foreign Ministry with his early statement that 'the Baltic cause is the Swedish cause,' a declaration that suggested a degree of commitment for which Swedish diplomats were not prepared.<sup>471</sup>

The seminal event Dahl is alluding to in this quotation was indeed one of the key moments in the history of Swedish post Soviet Baltic Sea policy. At his inauguration as Prime Minister in March 1996, Persson had stated that Sweden would engage for the Baltic interests just as if it was a domestic concern (Swed. *Balternas sak är vår*, literally, 'the affairs of the Baltics are ours as well'). This strong expression of Swedish commitment raised considerable irritations among Sweden's Nordic fellows, most importantly Finland, but also on the Baltic side, it was received with distinct reservation.

During the summer months of 1996, Prime Minister Göran Persson toured the Baltic States to maintain dialogue and discuss issues such as security in the region. The event would have not raised too much attention had it not been for some statements pertaining to Baltic security made in Riga and Vilnius. In Riga, Mr. Persson said: We now know that Latvia wants to become a member of NATO. We respect this and we shall do what we can to support Latvia in the process' [4 June 1996]. As expected, this statement raised considerable confusion. What did Persson really mean regarding Latvian NATO membership? Would Sweden serve as an envoy speaking on behalf of Latvian NATO membership? Were Persson's choice of words simply a Freudian slip or did he have deeper motives, such as testing how far Sweden could be part of the debate without raising too many reactions?<sup>472</sup>

These were just examples in a whole series of curious official Swedish statements in the Baltic context. Sweden evidently tried to promote its alleged appropriateness to serve as a moral leader of transformation in the BSR. The Swedish policy of cooperation in the region was to some extent one of seeking to create and secure stability in the post Cold War setting. However, another strong motive was the Swedish ambition to attain regional leadership, to transfer its Nordic conviction to the former Warsaw Pact countries to an extent that would strengthen its own standing in Northern Europe,

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471 Ibid., here p. 146.

472 LINDSTRÖM Gustav: Sweden's Security Policy. Engagement – the Middle Way. In: European Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Papers, No. 2/1997, p. 13.

including also prospects of an enlarged Nordic bloc. In fact, after the Danish defeat in the context of the Maastricht Treaty and the negative referendum in Norway, Sweden would have been given a double opportunity to take over the role of a Northern European leader.<sup>473</sup> However, the factual absurdity of the Swedish prospects and of the resulting strategic choices in its post Cold War identity building process became apparent once the whole process started to take an unfavourable (albeit predictable) course: the Baltic States sought more direct channels to reconstruct their way 'back into Europe' and showed little interest in the Swedish offer of a 'third way.'

The Swedish disappointment about the Baltics' eagerness to join the NATO was evident, even though, telling from the overall geostrategic situation it should not have come as a surprise. This Swedish disappointment could serve as part of an explanation why the early Swedish commitment for the 'Baltic affair,' in the eve of their accession, turned into overt frustration. The Swedish domestic discourse about the upcoming EU enlargement was dominated by negative sentiments; headwords like the "imminent danger of Baltic social tourists" (Persson, March 2004) and the Prime Minister's proposal of a "new membership tax" to secure that the new members would contribute appropriately to the relative gains resulting from their accession shed very negative light on the formerly fervent supporter of enlargement.<sup>474</sup> In contrast to this seesaw course of its Nordic brother, Finland pursued a much more straightforward approach in the BSR post Cold War setting. In contrast to Sweden, Finland remained fully supportive of the Baltic States' striving for full both European and transatlantic integration. Finland had always followed a pragmatic course in the NATO context, never openly striving for membership itself, but however, never ruling the membership option out the way Sweden did. Hence, despite some reservations regarding the possible Russian reaction, Finland did not have any substantial concerns about a Baltic NATO-enlargement.

While Finland followed this clear supportive line at the highest politico-strategic level, it nevertheless assumed an idiosyncratic position in the context of the Baltic EU pre-accession process. Finland showed a strong selective commitment for the Estonian case and fervently supported the country's quest for a preferential treatment in the accession negotiations.<sup>475</sup> This again provoked considerable irritations on the Swedish side since Sweden strongly supported a lockstep model for the Baltic Sea states, repeatedly stressing that the preferential treatment of one of them could "send the wrong signals to the candidate states and lead to a negative atmosphere and attitude among them."<sup>476</sup>

The Swedish view is that [...] there is much to be gained from supporting the positive developments made so far, and it is much more costly to deal with frustration from those who consider that they have not been fairly treated in the enlargement process.<sup>477</sup>

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473 DÖRFER Ingmar: *Nordic Nations in the New Western Security Regime*. Washington 1997, p. 36.

474 See GEBHARD Carmen: *Europäische Integration und Neutralität. Österreich und Schweden im Vergleich. Diplomarbeit* Vienna 2004, p. 201.

475 See BRANDER Richard: *Lågavattenmärke i relationerna*. In: Id. (ed.): *Finland och Sverige i EU. Tio år av medlemskap*. Helsinki 2004, pp. 67-85, here p. 76.

476 See HEROLF Gunilla: *The Swedish Approach. Constructive Competition for a Common Goal*. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): *The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Programme on the Northern Dimension of CFSP*. Helsinki/Berlin 2000, pp. 141-60, here p. 147.

477 *Ibid.*, here p. 153.

From a Swedish point of view, the act of enlargement itself had much more significant impact on the region than small steps and achievements in the field of cross-border cooperation could have.<sup>478</sup> Finland assumed a more pragmatic attitude and largely detached the enlargement issue from other efforts of ‘getting the EU involved’ in the region. The Finnish ND initiative opened another chapter in the history of the Swedish-Finnish divide in regional matters.

## *E. The EU Northern Dimension – Showcase for the Swedish-Finnish Divide?*

### *I. The Irony of Competition II*

The immediate post Cold War setting appeared to provide the ideal framework for the Nordic ideology of peaceful cooperation and pacifism to eventually triumph on a wider European scale. For the first time in decades, enduring international peace seemed within reach; however, ironically, this scenery did not allow for the traditional and widely established Nordic ‘third way’ to do ‘business as usual’. After decades of Nordic engagement and effort to keep the tension in the Nordic region low, surprisingly, the lack of bipolar tension indeed had a *negative* impact on Nordicism and Nordic togetherness.<sup>479</sup> The global political changes had significant repercussions on the functioning of Nordic togetherness.<sup>480</sup> Decisive markers in this context have been each Nordic country’s choices in the context of European integration. First, it was Denmark in 1973, and then Sweden and Finland in 1995, to abandon the old Nordic policy of distancing. Norway and Iceland have continued to adhere to their traditional positions. This situation left the Nordic countries divided on an essential issue.

The majority [of the Nordic group] had transcended the borderline that used to be rather important for the Nordic self-understanding, while others have remained with these policies. [...] *Norden* was no longer the same joint meeting-ground it used to be now that a major constitutive wall or external borderline, that of ‘Europe’, had fallen.<sup>481</sup>

However, EU-accession and consequent membership itself were not the sole factors to determine the applicability of Nordic togetherness. What actually decided for the Nordic system of cooperation to loose momentum was the choice of the Nordic EU member states to remain within or to detach themselves from the Nordic commonsense. There actually was considerable potential for newly integrated countries like Sweden and Finland to at least get together in a Nordic coalition within the EU and thus, to pool common interests and common goals as they had been present throughout decades of Nordic cooperation. The departures of the Nordics could have been unified to the extent that *Norden* could have been given the function of a vehicle for the Nordic Member States to coordinate their European policies. Most importantly, the EU ND could have

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478 See DUBOIS Jeroen: The Northern Dimension as Prototype of the Wider Europe Framework Policy. University of Liverpool, Working Paper. Liverpool 2004, p. 3.

479 See DAHL Ann-Sofie: To Be or Not to Be Neutral. Swedish Security Strategy on the Post Cold War Era. In: INBAR Efraim/SHEFFER Gabriel (eds): The National Security of Small States in a Changing World. London 1997, pp. 175-196, here p. 187.

480 See chapter “Nordic Togetherness – the Changing Role of Nordic Cooperation”, p. 61-.

481 JOENNIEMI Pertti: Norden as a Post-Nationalist Construction. In: Id. (ed.): Neo-Nationalism or Regionality. The Restructuring of political space around the Baltic Rim. Stockholm 1997, pp. 181-234, here p. 187.

been taken as an ideal opportunity for Sweden and Finland to revive their cooperative relationship. The following presentation of the intra-Nordic reception of the EU ND will show how, on what grounds and to what extent this chance has been seized by neither of the two.

### 1. *The Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative*

The institutional process that led to the creation of the EU Northern Dimension (Fin. *pohjoisen ulottuvuuden*/Swed. *nordliga dimensionen*) was initiated by Finland in 1997. The first formal outline of the Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI) was produced in the context of a letter written by Paavo Lipponen, then Finnish Prime Minister, to the (then) President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, in April 1997. In this seminal letter, Lipponen called for the establishment of a comprehensive policy to cover “the whole northern dimension of the Union’s external relations.”<sup>482</sup>

The idea itself was not exclusively new. Since the end of the Cold War, Northern Europe had turned into a very active region in terms of regionalist activities and initiatives. While its Nordic fellows, most importantly Denmark and Norway, immediately set out to take initiatives for the foundation of consultative regional councils, Finland adopted a rather passive and reactive role in these early years.<sup>483</sup> Finland was in an outsider position when Denmark together with Germany set up the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in 1992, and it was not perceptibly involved in the creation of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), initiated by Norway in 1993.

With its accession negotiations in full swing, the launch of the BEAC came as a surprise to the Finnish establishment.<sup>484</sup>

Additionally, in 1996, the European Commission launched the Baltic Sea Region Initiative (BSRI) within the CBSS framework, which put the Finnish government even more in a reactive position.<sup>485</sup> Ojanen identified three main objectives for the Finnish initiative: First of all and in view of the circumstances outlined above, Finland wanted to show some sort of integrationist activism, offering its specific knowledge and experience in the region for a common project on the European level. Secondly, it probably tried to seize the chance of customising the EU policy agenda to its own national interests. Thirdly, Finland wanted to give a clear statement of its post Cold War policy direction, namely the conscious break with historical dependencies and its

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482 See CATELLANI Nicola: *The EU’s Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations?* Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 14.

483 See ARTER David: *Small State Influence within the EU. The Case of Finland’s Northern Dimension Initiative*. In: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, No. 5/2000, pp. 667-697, here p. 681. Finland had promoted the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1989. However, this action was not embedded in a wider European or transnational context but was carried out in Finland’s domestic domain and had a distinct intergovernmental character. Finland did not try to link the resulting Rovaniemi process to the question of EU accession, and thus, missed an important opportunity to become more visible as a regional stakeholder. Involving non-European partners (Canada, USA) as from 1991, the initiative never got much attention in the EU context. See official homepage of the Arctic Council [www.arctic-council.org](http://www.arctic-council.org) [12 February 2008].

484 CATELLANI Nicola: *The EU’s Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations?* Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 9.

485 For more details about the initiative, see chapter “The Finnish Initiative from a Swedish Point of View”, p. 136-.

traditional status of non-alignment.<sup>486</sup> Some months later, in September 1997, Lipponen presented the political objectives of the initiative in a speech delivered at the 'Barents Region Today' conference in Rovaniemi/Finland.<sup>487</sup>

With the accession of Finland and Sweden, the European Union now extends from the Mediterranean to just a few kilometres from the Barents Sea. The Union has thus acquired a natural 'northern dimension.' My thesis [...] is: we need a policy for this dimension too.

Lipponen's argument that through the 1995 enlargements, the EU had not only gained new borders but also a set of geopolitical responsibilities has been recurrently reflected in political analysis. Accordingly, Haukkala identifies the EU ND as one of the direct products of EU enlargement emphasising that by way of the 1995 Northern enlargement, the EU had already gained a 'northern dimension'.

[Through the 1995 enlargement] the EU established its presence in the region and acquired a new direct contact with Russia in the form of the 1300-kilometre Fenno-Russian border.<sup>488</sup>

Joenniemi developed the idea further by claiming that the geopolitical changes resulting from the Finnish EU accession had literally *forced* the EU to become active player in the region.

The new and 'fuzzy' constellations of the region forced the EU to make use of its presence with the more northerly aspects gained by enlargement. Particularly the joint border with Russia, acquired in the context of Finland's membership, mandated reflection as the EU became Russia's immediate neighbour.<sup>489</sup>

To a certain extent, the emergence of a new border to Russia certainly influenced the politico-strategic attitude and perspective of the EU towards Northern Europe. However, the long-term effects of the 1995 enlargement round had to be questioned, and the respective relevance of the EU ND even more so. The perceived challenge or responsibility of the EU to become an active and visible player in this part of the continent proved to be a short-term ambition and declined in the late 1990s. Once the Finnish aspirations had been formally contented, the considerable part of geostrategic attention shifted to the East and turned to the issue of formal Baltic integration.

The bilateral relations with Russia retained highest priority, which would not yet argue against the EU ND. However, the policy channels that were chosen in order to enhance this relationship did not exclusively focus on the EU ND framework. Other, more direct policy channels were favoured in order to become active in the region, just as the pre-accession process of the Baltic States. The foreign political conduct of Russia in view of

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486 See OJANEN Hanna: The EU and its 'Northern Dimension'. An Actor in Search of a Policy, or a Policy in Search of an Actor? In: European Foreign Affairs Review, 2000, pp. 359-376, here pp. 361-362.

487 See LIPPONEN Paavo: The European Union Needs a Policy for the Northern Dimension. Speech delivered at the conference "Barents region today" in Rovaniemi/Finland, 15 September 1997. Official website of the Finnish Government [www.vn.fi/vn/english/speech/970915e.html](http://www.vn.fi/vn/english/speech/970915e.html) [26 December 2007].

488 HAUKKALA Hiski: Whose Governance? Challenging the Dominant Northern Dimension Discourse. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): Northern Veche. Proceedings of the Second Northern Research Forum, held in Veliky Novgorod, Russia. 19-22 September 2002, pp. 105-107, here p. 105.

489 See JOENNIEMI Pertti/SERGOUNIN Alexander A.: Russia and the European Union's Northern Dimension. Encounter or clash of civilizations? Novgorod 2003, p. 10.

the upcoming EU integration of the Baltic three was perceived a litmus test for the future relationship, and more generally, for the potential possibilities to stabilise the European neighbourhood in a sustainable way.<sup>490</sup> The idea of the EU being “forced to act in the North” and the EU ND being the result of this enforcement certainly goes too far. The Finnish initiative was adopted on official terms and Finland got its way to an extent that it had transferred a set of distinct national interests to the level of “common responsibility”. Finland managed to draw official attention to a part of the continent that was at that time well outside the area of common concern for most member states.

Other neighbourhood regions – such as the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe – were ranked much higher on the common list of shared EU challenges than the North. The long debate on European identity in the international system did not include the problems raised in that region in a satisfying way. [...] Somehow, it was for many observers and politicians like an area forgotten or at least low on the agenda of threat perception. The benign neglect was due to geographical distance, the lack of historical memories and – perhaps most important – to apparently crisis-free evolutions.<sup>491</sup>

Hence, at the early stage, Lipponen obviously had to avail himself of certain argumentative strategies in order to relativise the obvious curiosity of the initiative and to foil the wave of suspicion and latent protest emanating from the southern European Member States. An important element in this appeasement strategy was to ask neither for new funding instruments nor for particular EU ND budgetary allocations. Another dodge was to avoid considerations about new institutional structures to support the objectives of the future EU ND working agenda, and instead, to enhance the existing formal capacity of the EU and the Member States to implement the policy.

Worried commentators claim the EU was implicitly pushed to take up responsibility, which it was unwilling and unable to shoulder. The EU as a key action [sic!] was apparently asked to contribute to solving some, so far rather distant problems; critics were afraid that a new regional responsibility without clear objectives and an adequate set of instruments would add to the ‘capability-expectations gap’ that the haunted Union was blamed for throughout the nineties.<sup>492</sup>

This could help to explain why during the first decade of policy implementation, the engagement and moral commitment of the EU institutions has been considerably low.

The very early stages of the process (between the launch of the initiative and the first Commission Communication) were characterised by only lukewarm support for the initiative among certain sectors of the Commission’s DG External Relations.<sup>493</sup>

An important evidence for the Commission’s reluctance in this respect can be found in the development of what could be called the “EU ND talk”. While the original Finnish declarations laying out the ambitions of the initiative were characterised by a positive

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490 See BILDT Carl: The Baltic Litmus Test. Revealing Russia? In: Foreign Affairs, September/October 1994, pp. 72-85.

491 WESSELS Wolfgang: Introduction. The Northern Dimension as a Challenging Task. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 18-29, here 19.

492 Ibid., here p. 20.

493 CATELLANI Nicola: The EU’s Northern Dimension. Testing a New Approach to Neighbourhood Relations? *Utrikespolitiska Institutet*, Research Report 35, Stockholm 2003, p. 15.

and widely enthusiastic tune, the subsequent EU documents that were to lay the ground for the respective EU policy framework were far more contained and close to noncommittal. The following statement offers a good example in this respect:

The ND ensures that the EU's activities and instruments continue to focus on this region. However, it should not be seen as a new regional initiative, which in the Commission's view is not necessary. The CBSS and BEAC continue to play a useful role in addressing the problems facing the region. The Commission continues to participate in these fora, in particular regarding the exchange of information, cooperation and further development of these instruments in the perspective of advancing the objectives of the ND.<sup>494</sup>

The Finnish initiative had initially postulated the establishment of a distinct EU policy that would address the specific needs and interests listed on their ambitious agenda. What the Commission made out of these prospects is that it limited the function of the EU ND to the coordination of *existing* programmes, and moreover, relegated to the sufficiency of existing instruments for regional development.<sup>495</sup>

Concerning the assistance programmes relevant for the Northern Dimension, the European Community will follow the existing procedures, within existing budgets. Assistance will continue to be provided through existing programmes.<sup>496</sup>

The motivation behind the EU ND was obviously strongly related to the overall EU strategy towards Russia, if it was not reducible to that motive, and the general expectation that the EU ND could add more substance to this bilateral relationship.

The EU has appeared keen to purge the de-centralising notions from the initiative, whilst in other respects it has turned the ND into an initiative that actually supports the development of the Union's actor status. Consequently, the focus of the ND has shifted somewhat from what the EU can do for Northern Europe, to what the ND can do for the EU.<sup>497</sup>

The European Commission made clear that in fact there was no urgent need for a new regional initiative. These unfavourable preconditions were accompanied by general scepticism among the other Member States, and most significantly, also by Sweden.

## 2. *The Finnish Initiative from a Swedish Point of View*

Sweden's reaction to the Finnish initiative was rather retentive and reserved. At first, that was most probably because Finland had not considered consulting its neighbour and Nordic fellow on the issue, even though the two new Member States would have had very similar backgrounds as well as a series of shared policy interests. According to the Nordic tradition of cooperative politics, the Nordic Council would have offered the appropriate platform for a prior consultation involving also the other Nordic Countries, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. The fact that Finland did by no means show the political

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494 Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union. Communication from the Commission. COM(1998) 589 final, 25 November 1998, pt. 10.

495 See HEININEN Lassi: Ideas and Outcomes. Finding a Concrete Form for the Northern Dimension Initiative. In: OJANEN Hanna (ed.): The Northern Dimension. Fuel for the EU? Helsinki 2001, pp. 20-53, here p. 38.

496 Ibid., pt. 29.

497 BROWNING Christopher S.: Westphalian, Imperial, Neomedieval. The Geopolitics of Northern Europe and the Role of the North. In: Id. (ed.): Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements. Aldershot 2005, pp. 85-101, here p. 91.

will to coordinate its policy plans with its Nordic fellows and take multilateral steps to prepare the initiative on the regional level, provoked considerable intra-Scandinavian irritations.<sup>498</sup>

From a Swedish point of view, the Finnish initiative was seen as a competing project destined to challenge Sweden's firmly established Baltic Sea activities. Since the end of the Cold War, Sweden had largely tried to keep distinct regional issues outside the grasp of supranational influence and to rather use other channels, and most importantly, the CBSS framework, in order to involve the EU more actively in the Baltic Sea area. The above-mentioned Baltic Sea Region Initiative (BSRI), launched by the Commission in 1996 and strongly promoted by the then Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, was an important example in this context. In the context of its presidency in the CBSS (1995-1996), Sweden had enhanced the establishment of the so-called Visby-Charter, a framework document of the CBSS stating the regional objectives of the organisation, and thus, seeking to offer a functional point of reference for the EU to become more involved as an active player in the course of its implementation. The resulting "Visby-Process" was formally acknowledged by a Commission communication on the BSRI.<sup>499</sup> Even though by contrast, the Finnish initiative addressed a much wider geographical area not only including the Baltic Sea region but the 'far up North' as well, its objective reliance on the BSRI appeared evident to Swedish policy makers and experts in the field. In fact, the following comparison shows that both content and institutional design of the 'Finnish' policy were very similar to the BSRI.

<b>The Baltic Sea Region Initiative<sup>500</sup></b>	<b>The 'Finnish' EU ND<sup>501</sup></b>
"The objective of this document is to present an initiative to strengthen political stability and economic development in the BSR."	"The ND approach shall promote economic development, stability and security in the region."
"The BSR has a huge potential in terms of natural resources, production and trade. Its population is about 60 million of which half are EU citizens."	"The Northern region is of particular significance to the EU. It is a region of great natural resources, with considerable human and economic potential."
"The present initiative does not require funding additional to the existing Community programmes, nor affect the responsibilities of each provider of assistance with regard to their individual programmes and the rules which govern them. It outlines proposals for taking full advantage of existing co-operation and programmes by intensifying regional co-ordination and focusing on priority areas."	"Concerning the assistance programmes relevant for the ND, the EC will follow the existing procedures, within existing budgets. Assistance will continue to be provided through existing programmes. The Northern Dimension ensures that the Union's activities and available instruments continue to focus on this region."

**Table 14: The Baltic Sea Region Initiative and the EU ND in Comparison**

498 See DUBOIS Jeroen: The Northern Dimension as Prototype of the Wider Europe Framework Policy. University of Liverpool, Working Paper. Liverpool 2004, p. 2.

499 See Communication from the Commission. Regional cooperation initiative in the Baltic Sea Region. SEC(96) 608 final, 10 April 1996.

500 Communication from the Commission. Regional cooperation initiative in the Baltic Sea Region. SEC(96) 608 final, 10 April 1996.

501 A Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union. Communication from the Commission. COM(1998) 0589 final, 25 November 1998.



Also the official objectives and policy issues addressed in the EU ND widely coincided with the main concerns and aims voiced in the BSRI context. The focus on the relationship with Russia, on environmental issues as well as on the fight against organised crime and drug trafficking was recurrent in both documents. While seeking to position and evaluate the Finnish initiative in a wider geographical context, Wessels chose to consider the general significance of regional initiatives by Member States,

In a broader retrospective on the history of the European international profile, the Finnish initiative was in the end not particularly surprising: nearly all member states and most new states in particular define their role within the EU in terms of their own history and geography. [...] This kind of national mission for the Union as a whole serves to keep and strengthen former ties and to underline one's importance within the Union in relation to other EC states, who are supposed to accept a certain kind of natural 'de facto' leadership of the respective country in the common approaches. At the same time this, intra EU profile helps to reconcile one's own national identity with the sometimes difficult membership of the EU: The Union is then perceived as a continuation of historical and geographical concerns and missions with other means – as the support of the whole of the Union needs to be mobilised. A merging and even fusion of national European perceptions and interests is then expected.<sup>502</sup>

These considerations might help to explain the reluctant Swedish attitude towards the Finnish initiative. It was seen as a Finnish act of claiming regional leadership while this, based on a long tradition of regional self-awareness, had in turn been reserved by Sweden. When looking at these arguments in light of the Swedish integration policy, it becomes clear that Sweden pursues a different strategy in the course of its EU membership.

While Sweden certainly holds strong regional ties that largely bind major parts of its foreign and security policy agenda, these 'very Swedish' items still seem to be safely kept outside its official EU working programme. Sweden can hardly be claimed to seek to establish a systematic transfer of its regional agenda to the EU level, neither in view of creating an individual profile towards its fellow member states nor in order to pursue its major politico-strategic goals. To remain in Wessels' wording, since its accession to the EU, Sweden did everything to avoid the impression of its EU level activities to assume the character of a 'continuation of historical and geographical concerns.' This argument was easily sold in the Finnish public, since public opinion was heavily influenced by the newly emerged chance of 'rushing into the West', and therefore, traditionally featured a less distinct scepticism towards integration. In Sweden, in turn the notion of a systematic transfer of former domestic or rather exclusively Nordic issues to the unloved Eurocratic realm appeared to provoke connotations of loss of sovereignty. The comments by Herolf, a Swedish scholar and foreign policy analyst, are symptomatic for the Swedish attitude of reluctant reservedness and pragmatic albeit selective Nordic solidarity when it comes to the validation of the "Finnish Dimension", the EU ND.

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502 WESSELS Wolfgang: Introduction. The Northern Dimension as a Challenging Task. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 18-29, here p. 22.

In Sweden, the terms ‘Northern Dimension’ and ‘Northern Cooperation’ have traditionally been associated with the five Nordic states. [...] The Finnish Proposal for a ND of the EU, while having received the full endorsement of Swedish politicians, is not particularly well known among the public at large. Insofar as it is discussed, it is seen as a proposal signifying that the northern part of Europe should attract greater attention from others within the European Union. The [Swedish] government has also expressed a wish that this will lead to a strengthening of the regional organisations in the area.<sup>503</sup>

While there were certain reservations to this, as Herolf put it, “full endorsement” of the EU-ND among Swedish politicians, this quote also points at one of the most important specificities about the Swedish perspective on the policy. The potential of the EU ND to enhance *existing* forms of cooperation has major priority.

While [regional cooperation] is an area in which Sweden is deeply engaged, it is also one in which it is eager to see other European states contribute, namely as trade partners and supporters in security cooperation and a variety of organisations, each according to its specific capability. Among them the European Union is, however seen to have a particularly important role, due to the rich spectrum of capabilities within this organisation.<sup>504</sup>

The role of the EU as a framework actor for Baltic Sea Regionalism is not explicitly mentioned; the EU is rather seen as one out of many factors that contribute to the overall picture of a networked BSR. Moreover, special emphasis is given to the instrument of enlargement, which from an official Swedish point of view, appears to be the “single most significant building stone in a genuine, all-embracing security order.”<sup>505</sup> The analytical choice employed by Herolf reflects yet another particular feature of the Swedish view on the EU ND.

The term ‘Northern Dimension’ is not limited here to the Finnish initiative to create a northern dimension of the EU, but encompasses the impact which events and developments in northern Europe have on European security in general, and the EU in particular, and the role which various actors inside and outside the EU may play in this region.<sup>506</sup>

There is a certain tendency in these statements of trying to ‘de-finlandise’ the policy framework, and to disperse and relativise the air of Finnish leadership in the field of EU involvement in Northern Europe. To a certain extent, this way of dealing with the policy could also be identified in the course of the years following the Finnish advance. Sweden has been criticised for its strategic reluctance in this context, and for utilizing the EU ND as a tool and an arena for its wider Nordic anti-cohesion course in regional politics.<sup>507</sup> The following chapter will pick out two events of enhanced Swedish exposedness in this respect, the Swedish EU Presidency in 2001 and its CBSS

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503 HEROLF Gunilla: The Swedish Approach. Constructive Competition for a Common Goal. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 141-160, here p. 142.

504 Ibid., here p. 142.

505 See LINDH Anna: Sweden in Europe. Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs/Stockholm, 16 December 1998. Cited in: HEROLF Gunilla: The Swedish Approach. Constructive Competition for a Common Goal. In: BONVICINI Gianni/VAAHTORANTA Tapani/WESSELS Wolfgang (eds): The Northern EU. National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension. Helsinki 2000, pp. 141-160, here p. 153.

506 Ibid., here p. 143.

507 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 362.

Chairmanship in 2006-2007, which should provide a deeper insight into the specific approach Sweden has exemplified in the context of the EU ND's implementation.

## *II. And the Story Goes On: Is Sweden Trying to 'Keep the EU ND Alive'?*

At the time Sweden took over the EU Presidency from France in January 2001, the EU ND was just entering its operational phase. The European Council of Feira in June 2000 had adopted the first EU ND Action Plan for the period of 2001-2003 and mandated the Swedish Presidency to elaborate a "Full Report on the Northern Dimension" to be presented at the European Council of Göteborg in June 2001.

Despite the distinct Swedish reluctance in the context of the Finnish initiative, the Northern Dimension nonetheless formed part of the priority areas indicated on the Swedish agenda. The Swedish Presidency set out the aim to produce more action-oriented input and to further the implementation of the policy in the sense of concrete measures and activities. Sweden requested the European Commission to report to the Foreign Minister's Conference in Luxembourg in April 2001 on actions initiated in line with the ND Action Plan, and effected the formulation of the full report as foreseen. However, this should not be taken as a proof for a positive Swedish attitude or commitment. Sweden was merely sticking to the mandate posed by the Portuguese Presidency, and was in this sense simply fulfilling its "technical" obligations. Even though many observers did see the evidence of Sweden actually attaching importance to this very EU policy in the course of its presidency,<sup>508</sup> it should be considered that there might have been incidental parallels between the Swedish agenda and the EU ND objectives. Anne Haglund states that

Sweden chose to prioritise enlargement and achieved the political breakthrough one had aimed for, this also benefited the development of the ND. Also the second Presidency theme of environmental protection was compatible with the development of the ND.<sup>509</sup>

While these assertions are certainly appropriate to some extent, the mere fact that most of the issues prioritised by the Swedish presidency do basically coincide with the overall objectives of the ND, should not be misinterpreted. For the purpose of this study, it is rather important to look at how Sweden sought to promote its political interests on the European scene and whether and to what extent it used the EU ND as a framework to achieve certain political results in the course of its presidency. Concerning the Swedish efforts to further development in environmental issues, one must state that the EU ND did not explicitly constitute the main point of reference for the presidency. The Swedish government generally seemed to welcome the policy at that time since it was seen as a "flexible tool for advancing its own interests."<sup>510</sup> In the presidency conclusions, the EU ND appears to be rather detached from other issues, and it is clearly not applied as an overarching policy frame for action, most particularly regarding its core objectives, objectives that would even largely comply with major

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508 See e.g. STENLUND Peter: Implementation of a Northern Dimension. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): North meets North. Proceedings of the First Northern Research Forum, held in Akureyri and Bessastaðir, Iceland. 4-6 November 2002, pp. 126-129, here p. 127.

509 HAGLUND Anne: The EU Presidency and the Northern Dimension Initiative. Applying International Regime Theory. Vaxjö 2004, p. 125.

510 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Swedish interests.<sup>511</sup> The achievements of the Swedish chairmanship have remained very modest. Haukkala found a very clinical way to characterise the commitment towards the policy Sweden has shown during this phase.

It is difficult to prove that Sweden has not done its best to keep the policy alive. To some extent, it appears that there was not much more that Sweden could do, but obviously, it could have done much more.<sup>512</sup>

However, Haukkala still emphasised that Sweden had shown considerable dedication to the Finnish policy aspirations in 1999, when the EU ND for the first time risked to lose momentum and to be derogated by current political events. The upcoming preparations for the Eastern enlargement as well as the critical state of the EU's bilateral relationship with Russia had major negative impact on the substance and visibility of the policy.<sup>513</sup> By guaranteeing to put the policy on its presidency agenda in 2001, Sweden provided significant support to its fellow Finnish policy makers.

Another point of reference to analyse the Swedish attitude in the context of the EU ND implementation process is the Swedish Chairmanship in the CBSS (2006-2007). When comparing the official statements given in the context of the Swedish Chairmanship to their counterparts delivered in the course of the Finnish CBSS presidency in 2002-2003, there can be identified a series of differentiating tendencies. Sweden hardly ever refers to the EU ND as a superordinate policy framework, but rather (if at all) as a policy tool out of many others. Christer Persson, Ambassador and Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials in 2006 and 2007 described the Swedish perspective on the EU ND as follows:

Sweden, nationally and in its capacity of the present CBSS Presidency, attaches considerable importance to the discussions on, and development of a new Northern Dimension policy. Sweden in both capacities is convinced that the future ND-policy can increase the possibilities of regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea area in the years to come. Furthermore, from our perspective, the Northern Dimension policy also serves both an inspiration and a base for regional co-operation within other bodies and bilateral co-operative efforts. This is an important role.<sup>514</sup>

The EU ND is seen to be adding *some* value to existing structures but not to offer any exceptional instruments for concrete enhancement of regional cooperation. In its priority catalogue, Sweden does not mention the EU ND in a broader context or in the form of a major issue for the overall orientation of CBSS activities. It is merely mentioned in the context of a practical initiative in the field of Health Policy and Social Security, where the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS) is indicated as a framework to promote CBSS objectives and to enable

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511 See Presidency Conclusions. Göteborg European Council, 15 and 16 June 2001. SN 200/1/01.

512 See HAUKKALA Hiski, interview on 22 November 2006. Unpublished personal notes.

513 Haukkala reports about the event of the 1st Ministerial Conference on the EU ND in November 1999, where a great number of EU officials and representatives from other member states failed to appear because of the escalation of the conflict in Chechnya. See *ibid*.

514 See Speaking points on Northern Dimension by Ambassador Christer Persson, Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials. Presented at the meeting of the Chairmen of the four Regional Councils. Moscow, 18 August 2006.

the exchange of information and expertise.<sup>515</sup> What could be mentioned as a humoristic and bold indicator for the alleged lacking Swedish commitment to the EU ND implementation process is the fact that all official statements on the EU ND that were delivered during the period of Swedish Chairmanship were strongly relying on each other, and in some parts, the speeches held

- by Hans Dahlgren, Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and<sup>516</sup>
- by Christer Persson, Swedish Chairman of the CBSS<sup>517</sup>

were literally *copied* from an article by Carl Bildt, present Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, published in early 2006 in the “Baltic Rim Economies.”<sup>518</sup> The sequences directly taken from Bildt’s text did, however, not even in one instance, mention the EU ND explicitly. In fact, the foreign minister’s essay on Sweden’s role in the BSR goes without any single reference to the EU “Northern Dimension”. Instead, he (and reproducing his statement, also Dahlgren and Persson) just vaguely mention(s) a “regional dimension” that “should not be underestimated”, obviously avoiding to apply the official label of the policy. He also refrains from mentioning the EU as any reference point or factor in the context of Baltic Sea cooperation. The strong commitment to the intergovernmental CBSS is obvious from the beginning of this essay:

The cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region in the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) – has helped pave the way for increased regional integration and been instrumental in making the Baltic Sea Region one of the most competitive areas in the world when it comes to economic growth.<sup>519</sup>

However, it can also be told from Bildt’s statement that Sweden is ever more focussing on a dislocation of governance and responsibility ‘downwards’, meaning that subregional and local actors are becoming more important in comparison to governments.

One effect of the changes during the last years is that the cooperation within the CBSS has changed character and reached a more concrete and diversified level. [...] The governments are no longer in the driving seat. It is instead much more business, local authorities, universities and independent organisations that cooperate on many levels and in different capacities. This I find encouraging.<sup>520</sup>

Similar elements could also be found in a speech held by the then Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson at the event of launching Sweden’s CBSS Chairmanship. While naturally, as a Social Democrat, he did not copy Bildt’s essay, there were still significant parallels in his considerations about the priorities in Baltic Sea cooperation.

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515 See Priorities during the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, July 2006-June 2007. Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 16 January 2007.

516 ‘The Role of the CBSS in the Northern Dimension’, speech held by Hans Dahlgren at the Conference on the ‘Renewed Northern Dimension. A Tool for Enhanced Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation’, Tallinn/Estonia, 9 June 2006.

517 Speech by Christer Persson, Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, held at the Northern Dimension Senior Officials Meeting in Imatra/Finland, 22. September 2006.

518 BILDT Carl: Sweden’s Role in the Baltic Sea Region. In: Baltic Rim Economies, Nr. 6/2006, p. 6.

519 Ibid.

520 Ibid.

In line with the other statements, he was particularly reluctant to use the official label of the policy and rather focussed on the role and function of regional organisations in terms of their concrete output. The ND appears only once in a subordinate sentence at the very end without any content-related reference.

We intend to coordinate closely with the incoming Finnish and German Presidencies of the EU, not least as regards the implementation of the New Northern Dimension policy.<sup>521</sup>

Next to these broad tendencies, there is yet another important indicator for the overall orientation of the Swedish CBSS Chairmanship towards the EU ND. Looking at the distribution of activities organised by the chair, and comparing it once again to the Finnish CBSS presidency calendar for 2002-2003, it becomes evident that (unsurprisingly) activities with a distinct focus on the EU ND are far less present on the Swedish agenda while Finland had been close to activist in this respect.

Since the Swedish CBSS Chairmanship 2006-2007 coincided with the Finnish EU Presidency, the respective Swedish conduct can not least be regarded as a direct feedback and mirror of the concurrent efforts taken by Finland in the context of 'keeping the policy alive'. The year 2006 has been a key phase in the history of the EU ND. Almost ten years after its establishment, Finland effected a grand scale policy revival of the EU ND. A closer look at the Finnish commitments in this respect will provide a point of reference for the evaluation of the Swedish attitude, since it might make clear to what extent Sweden is lagging behind in terms of solidarity and genuine dedication.

### *III. Promoting the Finnish Perspective: Finland's EU Presidency 2006*

Finland's EU Presidency in the second half of 2006 has been strongly focussed on the project of revitalising the EU ND and of introducing a new operational concept for the enhancement of its objectives. Finland's first EU Presidency in autumn 1999 also had the EU ND as one of its key priorities. The first Northern Dimension Ministerial Conference was arranged then, and the European Council in Helsinki in December 1999 invited the Commission to prepare an Action Plan for the policy. Even though the whole undertaking had then been still in its infancy, the inherent weaknesses of the policy construct had already started to become apparent. Haukkala affirmed that the "problems were there right away in 1999."

From 1999 onwards, the EU ND was only loosing more and more momentum. Discussions about how to improve the standing of the policy were part of the every-day working process. At a very early point, Finland sought to map out the possibilities it had in order to bring the policy back on top. The options were clear. Finland could try to either make the whole construct more dynamic, or let it die right away. This second option was ruled out quite soon since Finland had already considerably exposed itself and could not just abscond after having reinforced the issue on highest levels.<sup>522</sup>

As indicated earlier in this section, the policy has been facing structural problems from the very beginning, mostly related to its inherent fuzziness, the lack of an administrative

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521 PERSSON Göran: Presentation of the Swedish CBSS Presidency, held at the Baltic Sea Summit in Reykjavik, 8 Juni 2006.

522 HAUKKALA Hiski, interview on 22 November 2006. Unpublished personal notes.

body proper and the unclear functional objectives. What proved to be the strongest drawback was the reluctant attitude of the European Commission, which should, in accordance with the legal foundations of the policy, constitute the major institutional actor guiding the implementation of the policy. What had already become clear in the final wording of the policy was continued throughout the later stages of the implementation process. Observers have repeatedly reported about the passiveness of the European Commission within the EU ND working bodies, and moreover, in respect to its responsibilities within the respective DGs. If at all, the Commission appeared to be solely concerned with the ‘Russian dimension’, not least reducing the EU ND to this substantial geostrategic issue. Whenever the initiative gained new momentum, it was mainly due to Finnish efforts to get the policy project back onto the current EU working agenda, whereas the European Commission showed little enthusiasm and hardly ever set active measures in order to develop the policy framework further or to proceed with the implementation process. In 2002, the Business Advisory Council (BAC) of the CBSS launched a fervid call for action to elicit “A New Start for the ND.”<sup>523</sup>

It was claimed that the EU ND had widely failed its initial objectives, most particularly in respect to the enhancement of the visibility of the “Northern agenda” on the European and international scene. The policy was – to a large extent – not more than “an extra label on Phare and TACIS projects.” Moreover, the BAC criticised the constantly low commitment of the European Commission, stressing for example that “only one person within DG External can be said to work on an every day basis with the Northern Dimension” and that “in the other DGs, as well as among most of the Commissioners, the ND has attained very marginal attention.”<sup>524</sup> Given this negative long-term course of developments, the recent Finnish efforts to keep the policy afloat (if ever it does not have to be *reanimated* indeed) could be interpreted as

yet another chapter in the series of Finnish frustrations while trying to make the ND a more vivid policy. [...] Finland has always tried to make the EU ND a genuine EU policy – which it has never been indeed.<sup>525</sup>

What Heininen once called the “new mantra or flagship of Finland’s EU policy”<sup>526</sup> has turned into a “nightmare,” and from the outside perspective, into a “yesterday’s meal nobody is interested in anymore.”<sup>527</sup> The Finnish Presidency has seen a series of well-intentioned measures to counter the negative flow that had paralysed the policy over the years. Finland’s quest for a “New ND” first emerged in early 2005 when the awareness about the limitation of the then current second Action Plan started to become pressing. The viability of simply launching a third Action Plan for the years to follow and to continue working normally has never been assumed. The negative experiences made in the first years of implementation had reinforced concerns about the future of the policy and fuelled prospects about what could be done to enhance its quality and substance.

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523 See Business Advisory Council of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). A Call for a New Start for the Northern Dimension. Presented at the ND Business Forum, 4th Annual BDF Summit, 14 October 2002. Document available on the website of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce (*Stockholms Handelskammare*) [www.chamber.se](http://www.chamber.se) [2 February 2008].

524 See *ibid.*, p. 1.

525 HAUKKALA Hiski, interview on 22 November 2006. Unpublished personal notes.

526 HEININEN Lassi: Ideas and Outcomes. Finding a Concrete Form for the Northern Dimension Initiative. In: *The Northern Dimension. Fuel for the EU?* Helsinki 2001, pp. 20-53, here p. 20.

527 HAUKKALA Hiski, interview on 22 November 2006. Unpublished personal notes.

Finland eventually chose to fight in order to get the policy construct where it had wanted it from the beginning: to the level of *genuine* joint commitment by both the European Commission and the fellow Member States. Analysts have recognised much earlier that the original setup was almost destined to fail.

Without the introduction of a long-term political vision in the Northern Dimension concept complementing the existing format, the initiative is destined to remain in the oblivion of a de facto second-class policy framework serving as a surrogate of foreign policy. [...] The absence of a strategic vision of Northern Europe and the need stressed by member states to attach substance to the initiative with short and mid-term projects are two aspects of the same question: the weakness of the EU as a foreign policy actor.<sup>528</sup>

The tune at the beginning of the Finnish Presidency has been very positive. The abashing motivation behind the Finnish efforts could only be guessed from several allusive statements delivered by governmental representatives. In the preface of one of the numerous promotion folders produced in the run-up to the presidency, Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen gave a small hint about the ‘real’ background of the new Finnish initiative:

The ND as a term is well known both in Finland and elsewhere in Europe even though its content and achievements have remained unknown to general public. One could even say that the ND has suffered from a sort of ‘marketing and communications problem.’ For example, few people are aware that environmental projects worth as much as EUR 2 billion, which are crucial for Finland, Russia and the rest of Europe, are currently being implemented by the ND Environmental Partnership. The Partnership is an excellent example of the fact that by joining our forces we can achieve more than we could on our own.<sup>529</sup>

However, in this very same folder, notwithstanding this vague indication by the Prime Minister that “there might have been a problem indeed”, the main author concedes more overtly albeit not yet critically enough that the policy has multiple structural weaknesses.

The EU’s Northern Dimension may be difficult to identify at times. On the one hand, it is scattered throughout the world in hundreds of projects largely unaware of one another. On the other hand, it is omnipresent as an umbrella term in policy and geographical discourse, covering pretty much everything. Even the region itself lacks clear delineation.<sup>530</sup>

Haikkilä definitely found a good way to point at problems without letting them appear as such. He was probably just trying to master the mission of having to write a convincing reader about an unconvincing policy. Unsurprisingly, the official documents that followed in the course of the presidency sought to achieve a similar balance between the objectives promoted and the underlying honest concerns.

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528 CATELLANI Nicola: The EU’s Northern Dimension after the Enlargement. In: BARBE Esther/ JOHANSSON-NOGUES Elisabeth (eds): Beyond enlargement. The new members and new frontiers of the enlarged European Union. Barcelona 2003, pp. 160-183, here p. 174.

529 VANHANEN Matti: To the Reader. In: HEIKKILÄ Markku: The Northern Dimension. Europe Information. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 188c/2006, Helsinki 2006, pp. 7-8, here p. 8.

530 HEIKKILÄ Markku: The Northern Dimension. Europe Information. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 188c/2006, Helsinki 2006, p. 9.



The first important step in the course of this ambitious policy revival had been the formal approval of a set of “Guidelines for the Development of a Political Declaration and a Policy Framework Document for the ND Policy From 2007” at the fourth ministerial meeting on the EU ND, held in Brussels in November 2005. Building on these guidelines, in November 2006, the Finnish Presidency presented a “Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension” at the ND Summit in Helsinki. The EU was represented by the Finnish Prime Minister Vanhanen, Commission President José Manuel Barroso and High Representative for the Common Security and Defence Policy Javier Solana. Russia was represented by Vladimir Putin, Norway by Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, Iceland by Prime Minister Geir Haarde, and Finland by President Tarja Halonen. Telling from both EU and Finnish Press Releases, Sweden was not officially represented. The decisions announced in this context were intended to transform the EU ND into a “common permanent policy” to be pursued by four equal partners: the European Union, Russia, Norway and Iceland.<sup>531</sup> One of the major specificities of the new policy framework is that it aims at ‘equal co-financing of a realistic number of agreed and concrete projects together with the active International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors in the ND region.’

The present policy framework document is a *joint achievement* of the partners. The ND partners recognise that their cooperation framework can only be driven by the spirit of partnership and based on *shared confidence*. The ND is *henceforward* a *common* project and a *common* responsibility [emphases added].

Knowing the previous history and record of the Finnish efforts in the EU ND context, there may be identified some elements in this quotation that indicate the basic considerations lying at the background of this new initiative. The recurrent use of expression like “joint”, “common” and “shared” can be ascribed to the Finnish experience about the lacking commitment of the parties involved within the ‘old’ framework. The notion of “henceforward” can be interpreted in a similar way, in the sense of ‘as from now’ and ‘unlike in the past.’ The arguments that recurred in most official statements in the context of the policy revival could be categorised as follows:

- the argument of Europeans being collectively responsible to maintain the substance of the policy, given the fact that it is the only one of its kind in Europe (“no other mechanism exists for such extensive cooperation”);
- a persistent claim for more ‘genuine’ commitment by the parties involved;
- the necessity to recall the added value of a joint venture in regional cooperation (“joining our forces in order to achieve more than we could on our own”);
- gain awareness about the clear Northern European responsibility of the EU;
- apparent weaknesses, such as lacking structure should be seen as an asset.

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531 Given the explicit focus on these four constitutive partners, the absence of a Swedish representative might well have been result of deliberate considerations. However, it should be emphasised at this point that Finland is obviously not trying (any longer) to develop a broad intra-Nordic commonsense on this issue. The presence of other Nordics such as Denmark or Sweden would have been conducive to the overall standing of the new document. Quotations are taken from the framework document if not stated otherwise. See “Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document,” adopted by the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland at the Northern Dimension Summit in Helsinki, 24 November 2006.

What appears most problematic is that Finland has assumed a defensive position, putting itself into the role of the begging one. From the promotional material distributed in the context of the Finnish Presidency, it becomes clear that Finland has long since begun to develop and cultivate its own version of the policy – a “Finnish perspective” on the Northern Dimension. Important evidence in this respect can be found in the output of the Northern Dimension Research Centre (NORDI) situated in Lappeenranta/Finland.<sup>532</sup> In one of its recent folders published in the course of the Finnish Presidency, there can be found the following description of the nature and the objectives of the EU ND.

The Northern Dimension exists on two levels. On the macro level, the Northern Dimension is a political concept for attracting the EU’s attention to north-east Europe and for emphasising the importance of the Union’s cooperation with north-west Russia. On a more concrete micro level, the Northern Dimension consists of the founded Partnership for Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) and the Environmental Partnership (NDEP), but it also involves all the activities that are being carried out within the Northern Dimension area by various actors, such as individual countries, coalitions of countries, the Commission, regional councils and authorities, NGOs and corporations.<sup>533</sup>

A similar interpretation is reproduced in other publications of the Presidency, such as in a brochure on “The Northern Dimension – A Finnish Perspective.” The distinction between two policy levels does not occur in the policy document itself. In many respects, the newly emerging ‘Finnish reading’ deviates from ‘what has been agreed’ and in various respects, it also exceeds the scope and commitment of the official policy framework at hand. This might be seen as an evidence for the liability of Finland to duplicate its project in ‘private,’ trying to balance the fact that even within the new framework, the expected level of commitment by the other parties is not in line with Finnish expectations. The new Finnish ND initiative was to “replace ambitions with objectives” and to substantiate the policy by way of concrete commitments and eventually, visible outcomes. With these ambitious prospects, Finland has exposed itself once again at highest levels. However, this dedicated self-exposure must be seen as an emergency measure that Finland felt forced to take in order to keep the policy from an ultimate failure.

Finland has clearly aimed to shift the policy contents to the responsibility of the Union, rather than being the driving force itself. If the development had taken another course, it would not have tried to stand out as a leader allegedly promoting national interest under the cloak of common European responsibility [as that is what Finland has been repeatedly accused of]. What is happening to its ND Initiative was and still is very embarrassing and frustrating for Finland.<sup>534</sup>

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532 The Centre has been established upon a Finnish initiative in 2003, in order to “coordinate research into Russia and Eastern and Central Europe,” and thus, to increase cooperation with different departments and researchers at University. NORDI conducts research related to all fields of the Northern Dimension policy and seeks to fulfil an academic role as well as a public function as a centre for information and exchange of knowledge. For more information, see the official website of the Centre [www.lut.fi/nordi](http://www.lut.fi/nordi) [26 March 2008].

533 See INFO folder on the EU Northern Dimension. NORDI, Laapeenranta 2006. Available on the website of the Centre.

534 HAUKKALA Hiski, interview on 22 November 2006. Unpublished personal notes.

Taking this assessment of recent developments together, and considering the respective attitude of Sweden, the following chapter will seek to give a broader picture of the actual state of affairs as well as an outlook on supposable future developments in this matter of Swedish-Finnish dispute.

#### *F. Evaluation: The EU ND Reconsidered*

The case of the Swedish-Finnish divide over the general nature, content and objectives of the EU ND makes clear that despite lacking interest and commitment from a major part of the EU Member States and – not least from the side of the Commission, the establishment of a genuine “northern dimension” is additionally hampered by an ironic and yet decisive conflict among neighbours and fellow Nordics. The argument that both Sweden and Finland would indeed profit from pooling their efforts directed to their geographical surrounding does not really necessitate sophisticated explanations. They are situated in similar geostrategic positions; even more so, they have an extensive set of shared security concerns and regional objectives, e.g. in the field of environmental or maritime policy. Their common Nordic background would constitute an additional asset. However, despite these close to ideal preconditions, there are no indicators for the readiness or willingness of any of the two to depart from their established positions, which in either case, might have legitimate and consistent normative foundations, but from a practical point of view, have no conceivable advantage.

As the analysis has shown, Sweden and Finland do not agree on the most basic aspects of both European and regional cooperation. The Swedish-Finnish divide cuts through all facets of BSR politics. Their divergent approaches towards regional integration result, in the first place, from the difference in how they generally view the purpose and value of EU membership. While the Finnish attitude is rather affirmative, the Swedish position appears to be largely reserved. Sweden is constantly trying to keep the supranational or ‘outside’ impact as low as possible. Evidently, the Swedes prefer channels of bilateral cooperation, and moreover, they are rather in favour of governance shifts ‘downwards’ than ‘upwards.’ Sweden promotes structural diffusion in the field of Baltic Sea cooperation instead of enhancing large-scale framework solutions and further institutionalisation. This ‘grass root’ approach is diametrically opposed to the Finnish conception. Finland is not only a convinced and highly compliant EU member state that seeks to fulfil its official commitment in the best possible way; apparently, it is also very keen to use the opportunities that emerge from its membership. It seeks to deploy the EU channels at hand to pursue its goals and objectives, and it is not reluctant to take over the initiative role in order to customise the given supranational framework according to its needs and interests.

In the EU ND context, Finland has therefore often been blamed to (ab)use its membership asset for the maximisation of its own interests, and to proclaim alleged ‘shared’ responsibilities in order to sell its policy solutions and gain support for self-serving political undertakings. Sweden has been very distrustful, and at times, overtly irritated about the Finnish attempts of ‘getting the best for being in the club.’ This lacking confidence has resulted from the competitiveness that emerged within the Nordic cooperative formation after the end of the Cold War. In many cases, this allegedly ‘soft’ competition had very negative effects for both sides.

Instead of permanently sidelining each other's policy initiatives, the two neighbours could have tried to find a common denominator (which should have evidently not been impossible) and get together on coherent and effective grounds. However, the fact that this has not happened in the EU ND context, i.e. in a situation that would have provided close to ideal preconditions for a Swedish-Finnish joint venture, makes clear that this divide must result from much more than just an inherent unwillingness to make compromises, and thereby, to achieve more straightforward solutions.

In fact, looking more closely at the interests and motives on either side, it becomes evident that even their idea of how to define '*Norden*' is different. For Sweden, the 'North' is clearly centred around the Baltic Sea. For Finland in turn, the 'North' is much more 'northern' in the sense that it includes also more remote areas like the Arctic and the Barents Sea. These diverging geopolitical perceptions already constitute a major problem. From the Swedish point of view, a policy like the EU ND with a comprehensive geographical scope is far too broad and diffuse. Therefore, other channels appear more attractive to Swedish policy makers. Well-defined approaches with a distinct focus on the key areas of strategic interest gain more attention; this commitment is then, as the EU ND case has shown, not available for policy alternatives offered and promoted by other actors.

Another source of divergence that hampers the establishment of a joint northern policy perspective lies in the field of structural conceptions. As pointed out before, the EU ND in its past and present design is not very substantial in institutional terms. It has only a very loose formal structure, with the Senior Officials meeting and the ministerial sessions being its only structural ledgers. The output of these meetings and summits has been very low in the beginning, and has remained modest throughout the whole implementation process. However, evaluating the EU ND on the basis of rigid institutionalist criteria is probably neither fruitful nor appropriate. In fact, in essence, the EU ND has mainly been intended to operate on a project basis, and it was rather constructed as a process than as a "turn-key project."<sup>535</sup>

Finnish policy makers have repeatedly emphasised that this flexible structure should be seen as an advantage, bringing added value for all players involved. In fact, not even Finland would have supported the creation of a centralist or supranational body to govern the policy implementation, as not least on the national level, it would have been very difficult to promote. Haukkala claims that in the context of the first policy initiative, the Finns were not only unable but also unwilling to give more substance to the EU ND.

Although this has often resulted in growing frustration in respect to the effectiveness of the initiative, one can also view the situation in a more favourable light. This vagueness or open-endedness of the Northern Dimension can also be seen as something that should be preserved rather than overcome by a frenetic bureaucratic development of the initiative.<sup>536</sup>

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535 See DUBOIS Jeroen: The Northern Dimension as Prototype of the Wider Europe Framework Policy. University of Liverpool, Working Paper. Liverpool 2004, p. 5.

536 HAUKKALA Hiski: Whose Governance? Challenging the Dominant Northern Dimension Discourse. In: Northern Research Forum (ed.): Northern Veche. Proceedings of the Second Northern Research Forum, held in Veliky Novgorod, Russia. 19-22 September 2002, pp. 105-107, here p. 107.

Even though a further institutionalisation would have enhanced the visibility and effectiveness of the policy, Finland has so far always abstained from the promotion of increased formalisation. The governance concept underlying this specific (a)structural nature of the EU ND is, not least, similar to that of traditional Nordic cooperation, which Joenniemi defines as follows:

It has been relatively easy for the Nordic States to tolerate Nordicity. The states have not been seriously offended as the discourse rarely touched upon anything that belonged to the sphere of the Nordic states themselves, it had few interactionist consequences and the states have to a large degree remained indifferent to the whole Nordic spatialisation, nor has any Nordic state been dominant enough to be able to take over, politicise and transform Nordicity into a statist project of its own.<sup>537</sup>

However, after the negative record of the policy had become evident in the first years of its implementation, these structural foundations had to be reconsidered in any case. As a consequence, Finland has recently developed a certain propensity for further steps of structural formalisation. Paula Lehtomäki, Finnish Minister for Foreign Trade and Development has recently made the following suggestion:

There is room for even deeper commitment. In addition to ND meetings for ministers and civil servants, we need an operative body between different parties to ensure the execution and follow-up of Northern Dimension work.<sup>538</sup>

At a conference in January 2007 held in Hanasaari/Espoo (Finland) on the “Northern Dimension and Nordic cooperation” Prime Minister Vanhanen then argued for the establishment of formal coordination mechanisms between the Nordic Council of Ministers and the EU

Finland aims to build continuity between its recent Presidency of the EU and its current chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers, with the aim of launching a long-term policy for the ND based on its new framework document. It should not come as a surprise that Finland intends to steer Nordic co-operation within the Council of Ministers closer towards influencing EU policies. Finland finds it natural that the same items should appear on the agendas of both the Nordic Council of Ministers and the EU. In this way, the Nordic Countries may stay one step ahead on EU and EEA issues, both in terms of decision-making and practical implementation. Under the new framework document, the ND will develop towards a cohesive joint policy for the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland.<sup>539</sup>

From a Swedish perspective, this sort of interpretation about the ‘natural’ course of institutionalisation might well be idiosyncratic. Sweden has always abstained from the development of rigid and formal links between the EU level and its domestic, or at least, regional sphere. Equally, it has always been a strong advocate of Nordic exclusiveness, taking pride in its seclusiveness and self-chosen insularity.

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537 JOENNIEMI Pertti: Norden as a Post-Nationalist Construction. In: Id. (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 181-234, here p. 206.

538 LEHTOMÄKI Paula, cited in HEIKKILÄ Markku: *The Northern Dimension*. Europe Information. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 188c/2006, Helsinki 2006, pp. 7-8, here p. 70.

539 Speech by the Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen at the conference on the Northern Dimension and Nordic cooperation in Hanasaari/Espoo (Finland), 17 January 2007.

Hence, the Swedish reaction to these formalist aspirations of breaking the Nordic ‘seal’ and of opening a channel for supranational intrusion, is easily predictable. In addition to this intricate intra-Nordic situation, the problems within the EU framework remain. There is no clear evidence yet that the Commission is intending to show a stronger commitment for the Finnish ambitions. However, major developments like the final implementation of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) at the beginning of 2007 allow for a preliminary valuation. The combination of existing financing instruments for regional and cross-border cooperation constitutes a major achievement in the EU relationship towards the East, and most importantly, towards Russia.<sup>540</sup> However, the policy channel employed for this seminal innovation was not the EU ND.

In the context of its new policy initiative, Finland has obviously tried to get Russia more interested by turning the old institutional design into a “common” policy. The EU ND Action Plans had so far only enabled a unilateral problem assessment and working process, while now, Russia is officially involved as an equal partner. The question is whether these almost desperate Finnish attempts of making the policy more attractive can compete with the evident benefits provided in the other policy contexts, most notably the ENP and the Strategic Partnership with Russia. At this stage, the long-term effects of the new Finnish initiative are not yet foreseeable. However, telling from the hitherto problematic course of development and the respective international and ‘European’ attitudes, and looking at the argumentative strategies employed in the context of this policy revival, the expectations should certainly not be too high.

Ironically, from today’s point of view, the only terminological choice for the EU ND appears like an ill-fated marker and self-fulfilling prophecy. Obviously conscious of the fuzziness the notion of a “dimension” might convey, during its Presidency in 2006, Finland has been noticeably trying to promote the “policy” tag for its initiative. This balancing act evokes the earlier debate about the formal quality of the new EU treaty, whether it should be regarded as “constitutional” in the widest sense, and whether labelling it as such would make it more attractive to people. The choice taken in this context is familiar to everybody. However, the relevance and effectiveness of this kind of sophistication is known, too.

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540 Even though Russia has abstained from taking part in the main ENP framework, Russian partners have been declared eligible for the new funding instrument. See note 348.

## Chapter 4: Explaining the Baltic Sea Conundrum

Many interpretations have been attached to the phenomenon of Baltic Sea Regionalism: for some, it is the response to globalisation, for others it is the manifestation of post-modern security thinking<sup>541</sup> or a post-security construction.<sup>542</sup> Lehti describes the regionalist dynamics after 1989 as “attempts to reorganize a disintegrating world [...] and a result of the blurring of the Cold War East-West division.”<sup>543</sup> The early cross-border activities took place in what Lehti calls a “formative moment”, meaning that old narratives were replaced by new ones with the overall aim of “bringing order in the midst of change.”<sup>544</sup> Sander identifies a certain predisposition for transnational cooperation or a “propensity for joining organisations” that is inherent to people living around the Baltic Sea.<sup>545</sup> The following section seeks to address the question of how and to what extent various different theoretical approaches (European Integration Theories, International Relations Theories and Comparative approaches) can be applied in order to explain the “Baltic Sea conundrum” meaning the set of specificities that distinguishes the BSR from other European regions, most importantly its eminent cooperative cohesiveness that turns the region into a showcase for regionalism and subregionalism. The central aim is to identify the analytical and explanatory value of various approaches, and thereby to provide a comprehensive basis and starting point for consecutive analyses on Baltic Sea regionalism.

### *A. Introductory Remarks on Regionalism and Integration*

Regionalism can be defined as a process in international politics that is based on mutual support, cooperation, coordination and cohesive networking between different actors within a certain geographical range. Integration, on the other hand, can be described as an act or process of a group of entities, and most commonly states, uniting to form an integrative whole or community. Integration can, just as regionalism, reach various levels of commitment, along a continuum from shallow to deep, depending on what degree of involvement the concerning parties wish to have.<sup>546</sup> Shallow integration involves, for example, the elimination of trade barriers or the restrictions to free movement of people. Deep integration, on the other hand, includes further steps of commitment such as formalised harmonisation of procedures, institutionalisation or centralisation.

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541 E.g. WÆVER Ole: The Baltic Sea: A Region after Post-Modernity? In: JOENNIEMI Pertti (ed.): Neo-Nationalism or Regionality. The Restructuring of political space around the Baltic Rim. Stockholm 1997, pp. 293-342.

542 JOENNIEMI Pertti: Norden, Europe and Post-Security. Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, Working Papers, 11/1998.

543 See LEHTI Marko: Possessing a Baltic Europe. Retold National Narratives in the European North. In: Id./SMITH David J. (eds): Post-Cold War Identity Politics. Northern and Baltic Experiences. London 2003, pp. 11-49, here p. 14.

544 See *ibid.*, here p. 21.

545 See SANDER Gordon: Off Centre. Baltic hands link across a troubled sea. In: Financial Times, 8 April 2000.

546 See BURFISHER Mary E./ROBINSON Sherman/THIERFELDER Karen: Regionalism. Old and New, Theory and Practice. Paper presented at the International Conference “Agricultural policy reform and the WTO. Where are we heading?” Capri/Italy, 23-26 June 2003, p. 5.

These definitions show that regionalism and integration are very close concepts. One of the essential preconditions for integration is a basic will and disposition to cooperate with other actors. This readiness and voluntariness of action also builds the ground for regionalism. In most cases, entities brought together by way of integration are also united by geographical vicinity. Integration processes often extend to the borders of a certain regional entity, e.g. a continent or parts of it respectively. Thus, in a certain way, European integration can be interpreted as a process of *regional* integration, a process that strengthens the economic, political and ideological links between the European states by way of cooperation. Baltic Sea Regionalism is based on similar grounds. Processing cooperation and networking across the Baltic Sea rim is an instance of integration, i.e. of the various actors conspiring for cooperation and togetherness. In line with this argumentation, BSR-based regionalism can be defined as yet another case of regional integration.

Wrapping up, European integration and Baltic Sea Regionalism can both be seen as living examples of regional integration, with the geographical range building the main qualitative disparity between the two.

Macro-level	-	European Integration
Meso-level	-	Baltic Sea Regionalism

Hence, besides the fact that the European project and the process of Baltic Sea Regionalism are closely related to each other (in the sense of macro- and respective sub-region), it can also be assumed that they follow a similar logic, the logic of progressive integration. These considerations lead to the next step of argumentation. Given this conceptual closeness between regionalism and integration, it appears legitimate and viable to address the corpus of (European) Integration Theory (EIT) to try to explain the inherent dynamics of Baltic Sea Regionalism and moreover, to trace the correlation between the broader process of European integration and the specific regional development in the BSR.

## *B. Theoretical Approaches to European Integration*

### *I. European Integration Theory: Addressing regional integration?*

Consulting the ‘oracle’ of EIT for the purpose of this study means, first and foremost, to concentrate on the ‘regional’ or ‘regionalist’ focus of the different theoretical approaches at hand. Many analysts equate the concept of ‘regional integration’ to that of ‘(general) integration’ by using the terms interchangeably.<sup>547</sup> However, not all approaches to *European* integration do explicitly emphasize the geographical or regional aspect. According to Rosamond, viewing European integration as an instance of regionalism, i.e. as “the tendency of groups of territorially-adjacent states to cluster together into blocs”, is actually only *one* approach out of several. He claims that there are at least four different “locations”, where one can seek to find an explanation for European integration.<sup>548</sup>

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547 See for example MATTLI Walter: *The Logic of Regional Integration. Europe and Beyond*. Cambridge 1999.

548 See ROSAMOND Ben: *Theories of European Integration*. Basingstoke 2000, pp. 14-15.



- International Organisations;
- Regionalism;
- Complex Policy and Governance Systems;
- Subject *sui generis*.

The materialization of the so-called European project has been a major challenge for International Relations (IR) Studies. The European integration process has been accompanied by decades of academic thinking, and thus, it inspired the establishment of what could be called an academic discipline of its own. European Integration Studies have brought about a large stock of theoretical approaches; in various different ways, analysts have tried to contribute to the global understanding of the political, institutional, social and economic processes that came along with the development of the European Community (EC), and later, the EU. Some approaches have managed to clarify certain aspects of integration, while they certainly failed to explain other particulars of the matter. However, it can generally be asserted that most traditional theoretical models of European integration do not specify or focus on the aspect of regionality or regionness. Indeed, most approaches take the fact of geographical adjacency for granted. Christiansen points at the fact that the EU has started very late to develop some sort of spatial approach towards certain policy issues.

The process of seeking to achieve *territorial* integration came relatively late to the European project. For most of its life, the integration process had its emphasis on functional sectoral integration, geared towards greater mobility of goods, people and services [...].<sup>549</sup>

Also Niemann argues that aspects of spatiality for many years have been systematically excluded from the European politics debate.<sup>550</sup> This tendency in the European integration process has been largely reflected in the models of explanation drawn by the respective contemporary integration theorists. Generally, the influence of the EU's development on the course of theory production seems close to obvious. Indeed, there are many examples that show how and to what extent EIT has followed the ups and downs of its subject, one of the most prominent ones being the rise, fall, and comeback of Neo-Functionalism in the wake of the Empty Chair crisis, and later, the SEA respectively.<sup>551</sup> Concerning a regional perspective on European integration, these dynamics resulted in a deep-seated inability among the dominant theoretical paradigms in integration studies to analyse spatiality or space. The question of what effects physical vicinity can have on the course of the integrative development of a region cannot be considered very current in traditional EIT. However, some theoretical models, most importantly the ones that involve normative reasoning about identity-related aspects of integration appear to be more dedicated to the effect of regional adjacency with the most prominent example being social constructivist integration theory.<sup>552</sup>

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549 CHRISTIANSEN Thomas: Towards Statehood? The EU's move towards Constitutionalisation and Territorialisation. In: Centre for European Studies. University of Oslo (ed.): ARENA Working Paper, No. 21, August 2005, pp. 13-14.

550 See NIEMANN Michael: A Spatial Approach to Regionalisms in the Global Economy. Basingstoke 2000, pp. 4-5.

551 See DIEZ Thomas/WIENER Antje: Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory. In: Idd. (eds): European Integration Theory. Oxford 2004, pp. 1-24, here p. 13.

552 See chapter "The Discursive Construction of Regions", p. 170-, and chapter "Why the Explanatory Power of Social Constructivism Remains Low", p. 177-.

The following considerations aim at structuring the plethora of theories at hand according to broad tendencies and developments in order to support and prepare the then following discussion about applicability and interpretation of European Integration Theories for the analytical purposes of this study.

## *II. Broad Tendencies and Competing Traditions in EIT*

Given the confusingly large number of different approaches to (European) integration, it appears appropriate to offer some kind of reference pattern or line for orientation that helps to overview the bulk of European Integration Theories. It is not in the scope of this chapter to provide an exhaustive picture of the history and the state-of-play in EIT. The following discussion is rather meant to impose some sort of structure onto the large sum of theoretical approaches that decades of research in the field of (European) integration have brought about. There are different ways of how to structure EIT. Diez and Wiener offer a chronological classification that helps to grasp the development of EIT as a strain within the broader framework of IR Studies.<sup>553</sup> Before outlining the three main phases of EIT, they draw an overall picture of what they call the “proto-integration theory period,” i.e. the scholar development that set the basis for what later became known as “European Integration Theory”. According to this perspective, classic Functionalism, with David Mitrany being its main representative, poses as some sort of ‘prototype’ for all the theoretical reflections on European integration that followed.<sup>554</sup> Wiener and Diez offer an overview that suggests different phases of EIT, emphasising the close relation between the socio-political context and the development of theory.

Phase	Period of time	Main issues in EIT
Explanatory	after 1960	integration as a process
Analytical	after 1980	the outcome of integration, EU governance and institutional features
Constructive	after 1990	different forms and levels of governance social and ideological construction of integration

**Table 15: Phases in European Integration Theory<sup>555</sup>**

553 See WIENER Antje: Finality vs. Enlargement. Opposing Rationales and Constitutive Practices towards a new Transnational Order. In: Jean Monnet Working Paper, 8/02. New York 2002, p. 4.

554 ‘A Working Peace System’ (1943) was Mitrany’s core publication. Impressed by the war experience, his contributions followed a very strong normative agenda. The main question addressed in his study was how to constrain states and prevent future war through the establishment of a network of transnational organizations on a functional basis. For him this question was more of a global concern than a specific European issue. In fact, Mitrany even strongly opposed the idea of regional integration since he perceived it to replicate rather than to transcend the state-centric design of International Relations. See ROSAMOND Ben: Theories of European Integration. Basingstoke 2000, p. 36. Early Federalism can also be perceived as part of this formative proto-period of European Integration Theory. In contrast to Functionalism, Federalism was more directly related to the European case, claiming, for instance, for the establishment of a European Federation of States. See DIEZ Thomas/WIENER Antje: Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory. In: Idd. (eds): European Integration Theory. Oxford 2004, pp. 1-24, here p. 7.

555 Table generated on the basis of DIEZ Thomas/WIENER Antje: Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory. In: Idd. (eds): European Integration Theory. Oxford 2004, pp. 1-24, here p. 7.

This scheme may serve as a first orientation guide. Anyway, most past and current approaches combine different aspects of theory and thus, do not clearly fit into these chronological categories. This is particularly true for the recent development in EIT, as the approaches that evolved after 1989/90 tend to be much more diversified and complex. The Eastern enlargement has brought about another rush of very diverse and innovative theoretical perspectives that made it even more difficult to identify some sort of analytical trend in EIT. This explosion of diversity is what Diez and Wiener referred to as the “mosaic of European Integration Theory”. Recent theoretical contributions have proved to be close to incommensurable, since their underlying analytical perspectives are becoming less mutually exclusive.<sup>556</sup>

What is changing as compared to the initial phase of theorizing about the EU is the higher degree of theoretical pluralism and the mutual irrelevance of approaches. New insights in, say, coalition formation in the European Parliament do not have any impact on theorizing about EU constitutional bargains because these theories have different fields of application which do not overlap. [...] In the early days, European integration was the subject of a controversy within international relations about the relative importance of ‘second image’ vs. ‘third image’ explanations, about the relevance of state actors vs. societal actors and about the possibility of creating durable peace by overcoming the anarchical structure in the international system. This clear embeddedness in one single sub-discipline has been lost.<sup>557</sup>

From the early 1950s onwards, Integration Theory used to be dominated by the major strands that academic thinking in IRT had put forth: Realism, Functionalism and their respective neo- and neo-neo-versions. In the late 1980s, as methods and approaches from other disciplines started to penetrate the field, the scenery became more and more diverse and fragmented. Even though indeed, it has become much more difficult to give a general overview of current theoretical approaches to regional and European integration, there are still certain “grand tendencies of thought” in the field. Scholarship about EIT has recently identified two significant “turns”:

- the “governance turn”, bringing numerous concerns about the specific *structure* of the Union onto the European integration research agenda. This “second wave of integration theory”<sup>558</sup> loosened from the bulk of tradition EIT by turning its focus more to the question of the Union’s specific “making”, i.e. the structural nature of its polity and the way politics occur across these structures.
- the “constructivist turn” that entered the Political Science scene by taking inspiration from sociology, linguistics and particularly from psychology;<sup>559</sup> what Rittberger decided to call the “deliberative turn” in EIT could be defined as a new strain of theories that highlight “the contribution of argumentative interaction.”<sup>560</sup>

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556 See DIEZ Thomas/WIENER Antje: Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory. In: Idd. (eds): European Integration Theory. Oxford 2004, pp. 1-24, here p. 19.

557 JACHTENFUCHS Markus: Deepening and Widening Integration Theory. In: Journal of European Public Policy, No. 9/2002, pp. 650-657, here p. 651.

558 See KELSTRUP Morten: Integration Theories. History, Competing Approaches and New Perspectives. In: WIVEL Anders (ed.): Explaining European Integration. Copenhagen 1998, pp. 15-55, here p. 34.

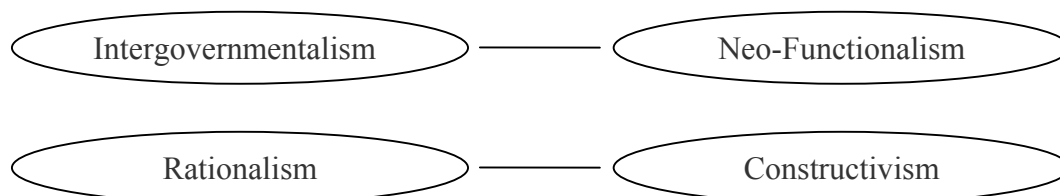
559 See CHECKEL Jeffrey T.: The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory. In: World Politics, No. 2/1998, pp. 324-348.

560 See NEYER Jürgen: The Deliberative Turn in Integration Theory. In: Journal of European Public Policy, No. 5/2006, pp. 779-791.

The emergence of these turns did not follow any sort of time axis. There was no specifically identifiable point in the development of EIT where academia “turned” towards the analysis of governance; also, the “constructivist turn” should not be seen as an event reversing the direction of European integration thinking. Instead, the two turns occurred largely parallel to one another, or rather, they drew upon each other, and in turn, contributed to each other. A similar interpretation is suggested for the alleged “spatial turn” in integration theory, which has, as identified by Rumford, introduced issues like territoriality, spatiality as well as reflections about bordering and re-bordering to the field. He claims that, while the above-mentioned “governance turn” has largely been acknowledged and documented; the transformation of space that this very turn has entailed has hardly gained much attention in the theoretical debate.<sup>561</sup>

This assessment shows once again that these so-called “turns” should not be perceived as conceptual turning points that crossed the academic debate with a clear-cut new way of argumentation. In fact, the “governance turn” contributed to the transformation of what in traditional theoretical approaches was commonly perceived as “space” or “European territoriality”. The “levels” that multi-level governance approaches mainly focus on can be perceived as constructed spaces, and there again, the “spatial turn” starts to intersect with the constructivist trend in theoretical reasoning about European integration. Summing up, the image of chronology as it is purported by the notion of a “turn” in EIT is actually more confusing than helpful. It appears more appropriate to identify these newly emerging analytical perspectives as broad tendencies gradually changing and shaping the corpus of traditional EIT. We identify a certain tendency of analysts increasingly stressing the significance of normative effects of political discourse or social interaction as well as the tendency of questioning the nature of European space, a perspective that, in contrast to the traditional notion of European territoriality, focuses on the importance of spatial change and the potential effect these changes could have for the functioning of European governance structures.

Besides pointing at recent “turns” and emerging tendencies in EIT, references to the big and allegedly competing strands of theory in traditional European integration studies should help to gain an overview of the bulk of theoretical approaches at hand. One can identify two major axes of competition in EIT that have proved to be formative, and thus, structuring for the overall development of the field:



**Figure 5: Axes of Competition in European Integration Theory**

<sup>561</sup> See RUMFORD Chris: Rethinking European Spaces. Territory, Borders, Governance. In: Comparative European Politics, No. 4/2006, pp. 127-140, here 128. See for example ANDERSON James/O'DOWD Liam/WILSON Thomas M. (eds): New Borders for a Changing Europe. Cross-border Cooperation and Governance. London 2002.

### 1. Dichotomy I: Intergovernmentalism vs. Neo-Functionalism

Intergovernmentalism and Neo-Functionalism are usually referred to as the main dichotomy that dominated the field of European Integration Studies over the decades. The intergovernmental strain covers the complex of realist approaches, including its pure intergovernmental and liberal intergovernmental modifications. The functionalist strain, on the other hand, includes its neo- and neo-neo-versions. The two paradigms are what Schmitter and Malamud called “historic or even natural opponents”.<sup>562</sup> The establishment of the neo-functionalist paradigm could be seen as a “frontal assault” on the prevailing theories of IR at the time, which were intergovernmentalist approaches, or more specifically, approaches pertaining to the complex of Realism.<sup>563</sup> The neo-functionalist and the intergovernmentalist paradigm do have something in common, which is: their central *explanandum*. In contrast to other EIT approaches, both neo-functionalists and intergovernmentalists are more concerned with the process of integration than with the political system that integration leads to.<sup>564</sup> This common point of reference is what turns them into directly competing meta-theoretical models.<sup>565</sup> The most important difference between the two approaches lies in both the ontology of actors that they build upon, and the epistemological grounds that form the foundation of their models of explanation. Schmitter and Malamud have elaborated on the significance of these two variables when competing theoretical approaches are compared. Generally, the ontological grounds of an approach result from whether it presumes a process that reproduces the existing characteristics of its member-state participants and the interstate system of which they are a part, or whether it presumes a process that transforms the nature of these sovereign national actors and their relations with each other. Epistemology, on the other hand, results from the theoretical choice of whether the evidence gathered to monitor these processes focuses primarily on dramatic political events, or on prosaic socio-economic-cultural exchanges.<sup>566</sup>

	ONTOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY
<b>Neo-Functionalism</b>	transformative (actions and actors change in the course of the process)	observation of gradual, unobtrusive exchanges
<b>Intergovernmentalism</b>	sovereign states remain dominant actors	focus on decisive events that lead to modifications

**Table 16: Ontology – Epistemology: Neo-Functionalism vs. Intergovernmentalism**

562 SCHMITTER Philippe C./MALAMUD Andrés: Theorizing Regional Integration and Inter-Regional Relations. Workshop Proposal. Florence/Lisbon 2006, p. 3. Website of the European University Institute, Florence [www.iue.it](http://www.iue.it) [22 November 2007].

563 See JACHTENFUCHS Markus: Deepening and Widening Integration Theory. In: Journal of European Public Policy, No. 9/2002, pp. 650-657, here p. 651.

564 See DIEZ Thomas/WIENER Antje: Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory. In: Idd. (eds): European Integration Theory. Oxford 2004, pp. 1-24, here p. 5.

565 See JACHTENFUCHS Markus: Deepening and Widening Integration Theory. In: Journal of European Public Policy, No. 9/2002, pp. 650-657, here p. 651.

566 Table generated on the basis of MALAMUD Andrés/SCHMITTER Philippe C.: The Experience of European Integration and the Potential for Integration in MERCOSUR. Prepared for delivery at the “2006 Joint Sessions of Workshops of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)” Nicosia, Cyprus, 25-30 April, 2006, p. 5. Available on the website of the Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa in Lisbon. <http://iscte.pt> [12 December 2007].

According to the ontological presumptions of the neo-functionalist approach, the key actors of integration are transformative, i.e. their actorness changes in the course of the process as well as the “games they play”. In contrast, Realism suggests a static ontology: sovereign nation states pursuing their unitary national interests and controlling the pace and outcome through periodic revisions of their mutual treaty obligations remain the dominant actors in the process.<sup>567</sup> The neo-functionalist epistemology is rooted in the observation of gradual, normal and modest exchanges among a wide range of actors, while Realism rather looks at dramatic and obtrusive events that lead to decisive changes. Consequently, the intergovernmentalist definition of the integration process could be, as suggested by Katzenstein, “a sequence of irregular big bangs.”<sup>568</sup> Interestingly, the relevance of the functionalist-inter-governmentalist dichotomy is not a purely theoretical one. The functionalist paradigm has also entered EU reality to the extent that has become a quasi-official ideology in the European Commission and other parts of the supranational structure of the EU. Ironically, it is also used by the opponents of further functionalist integration to increase the fears of a technocratic, centralized, and undemocratic Union. Accordingly, governments supportive of further integration tend to resort to the intergovernmentalist rhetoric of sovereignty being only pooled to alleviate these fears.<sup>569</sup>

## 2. *Dichotomy II: Rationalism vs. Constructivism*

The second axis of competition presented here is different from the inter-governmentalist-functionalist divide to the extent that Rationalism and Constructivism have to be perceived as opposing *meta*-theoretical positions. Both Rationalism and Constructivism build on a broad foundation of theoretical considerations drawn from other disciplines, most importantly, from philosophy, cognitive science and epistemology. As a result, they both do not directly lead to testable assertions about observable outcomes, but first have to be turned into substantive theories and to be combined with a specific reference model of explanation.

Some even doubt about the possibility that meta-theories can be tested against each other, but argue instead that they constitute equally acceptable ways of explaining and understanding the world which can only be assessed within their own framework of rationality or by meta-criteria such as internal consistency and scope.<sup>570</sup>

However, the distinction between these major meta-theoretical strands could serve for the retrospective classification of various theoretical debates by contributing to a better understanding of the variety of approaches current in the field.

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567 SCHMITTER Philippe C./MALAMUD Andrés: Theorizing Regional Integration and Inter-Regional Relations. Workshop Proposal. Florence/Lisbon 2006, pp. 2-3. Website of the European University Institute, Florence [www.iue.it](http://www.iue.it) [22 November 2007].

568 See KATZENSTEIN Peter J.: International Relations Theory and the Analysis of Change. In: CZEMPIEL Ernst-Otto/ROSENAU James N. (eds): *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges*. Lexington 1989, pp. 291-304, here p. 296.

569 See BACHE Ian/GEORGE Stephen: *Politics in the European Union*. Oxford 2001, p. 15. And DIEZ Thomas/WIENER Antje: *Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory*. In: Idd. (eds): *European Integration Theory*. Oxford 2004, pp. 1-24, here p. 14.

570 JACHTENFUCHS Markus: *Deepening and Widening Integration Theory*. In: *Journal of European Public Policy*, No. 9/2002, pp. 650-657, here p. 652.

When applying this structuring dichotomy to the various theoretical strands at hand it becomes clear that Constructivism marks a departure from what could be called ‘mainstream theory’ in European integration. The main protagonists of traditional EIT, Intergovernmentalism and Neo-Functionalism, both largely adhere to the rationalist camp. Coming back to the above-given outline on the intergovernmentalist/neo-functional divide alongside their respective ontological and epistemological foundations, Constructivism could be fit into the scheme as follows:

		ONTOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY
<b>Rationalism</b>	<b>Intergovernmentalism</b>	sovereign states remain dominant actors	focus on decisive events that lead to modifications
	<b>Neo-Functionalism</b>	transformative (actions and actors change in the course of the process)	observation of gradual, unobtrusive exchanges
<b>Constructivism</b>		constituting (meaning is not restricted to the actor but comprises the significance given to it by other actors/society)	focus on the permanent construction and reconstruction of political and social ‘reality’

**Table 17: Ontology – Epistemology: Rationalism vs. Constructivism**

By largely rejecting causal explanations – and in its rigid version – also the need or possibility of formulating testable hypotheses, and by focussing on the social or discursive *construction* of events or actors/action units, Constructivism has clearly defied the epistemological and ontological grounds of both major paradigms.<sup>571</sup> Christiansen et al. depicted two major “moves” entailed by the constructivist turn:<sup>572</sup>

- the ontological move: Constructivism does not perceive structure to be established by anarchy, but rather to result from social interaction among states; as Wendt put it: “Anarchy is what states make of it.”<sup>573</sup> This claim is based on the constructedness of identity, as the character of anarchy depends on how identities are defined. What kind of anarchy prevails, depends on what kinds of conceptions of security actors have, on how they construe their identity in relation to others;
- the epistemological move: highlighting the significance of inter-subjectivity in regime analysis, Constructivism perceives shared norms, rules and decisions as conditional. The relationship between conception of self and other and the prevailing systemic environment puts identities at the core of the constructivist approach. Again, identity is related to the claim about the inter-subjectivity of structures, which establishes the move towards the assumption that ‘reality’ is constructed, and *away* from any materialist stance.

<sup>571</sup> See GUZZINI Stefano: A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations. In: European Journal of International Relations, No. 2/2000, pp. 147-182, here p. 156.

<sup>572</sup> See CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: Journal of European Public Policy 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 535.

<sup>573</sup> WENDT Alexander: Anarchy is What States Make of it. In: International Organization, No. 2/1992, pp. 391-425.

To large extents, Constructivism has perceived itself as offering an alternative research programme to the prevailing and established rationalist mainstream in EIT. Transcending the narrowness of rationalist perception constitutes one of the main formative foundations of constructivist contributions in the field of EIT. The argument that Constructivism allows the analyst to see issues and connections that Rationalism is simply not equipped to see, has been highly shaping in the early phase of its emergence in the field.

[From a constructivist point of view] rationalist accounts miss an important part of the story, because they bracket identity and interest formation [...]. Constructivism can deal with the most interesting questions because it operates at the intersection between structures and agents: in contrast, rationalist [...] approaches ‘have life easy’, because they ignore the messy intersections and concentrate on one side of the story.<sup>574</sup>

However, arguments about the ontological primacy of a constructivist view are not very helpful, since they reduce the debate to an either-or level, or to the question of victory of one paradigm over the other. Instead of interpreting the above-mentioned “constructivist turn” as some sort of major cleavage in the field of EIT, the emerging dichotomy could be used in order to structure and classify various new approaches and to create distinct theoretical positions in the sense of categories that can be tested against each other. An important example of how the rationalist-constructivist dichotomy is structuring the current debate on European integration is the institutionalism incorporation of EU enlargement. The following comparison refers to the instance of different institutionalist positions on enlargement to clarify the opposing factors along this axis of competition.

Rationalist Institutionalism	Constructivist Institutionalism
empowerment of domestic actors	
<p>The domestic impact of the EU is perceived to follow a ‘logic of consequences’. The opportunity structure for utility-maximising domestic actors changes due to the adaptational pressure emerging from the supranational framework of the EU. The main factors impeding or facilitating changes in response to EU adjustment pressures are formal domestic institutions. In short, domestic change occurs by way of a differential empowerment of actors, and thereby, results from a redistribution of resources at the domestic level</p>	<p>The responses to EU adjustment pressures follow a ‘logic of appropriateness’; The domestic impact of the EU results from the process of socialisation, i.e. from domestic actors internalising EU norms that they regard as legitimate and applicable to their respective framework. ‘Change agents’ or ‘norm entrepreneurs’ inspire the process of persuasion by mobilising other actors in the domestic context and convincing them to redefine their interests and identities.<sup>575</sup></p>

574 SMITH Steve: Social Constructivism and European Studies: A Reflectivist Critique. In: Journal of European Public Policy, No. 4/1999 Special Issue, pp. 682-691, here p. 685. Referring to CHECKEL Jeffrey T.: The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory. In: World Politics, No. 2/1998, pp. 324-348.

575 See MARCH James G./OLSEN Johan P.: The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders. In: International Organization 52:1998, pp. 943-969.



Rationalist Institutionalism	Constructivist Institutionalism
EU strategy towards candidate countries	
Conditionality: the EU uses conditional incentives to influence candidate countries. The clarity of the EU demands is perceived to be crucial just as the general credibility of the conditionality. Legitimacy is perceived to be achieved through overt pressure rather than through ‘soft tactics’.	Socialisation: candidate countries come to consider that the EU’s rules have an intrinsic value, regardless of the material incentives for adopting them. Factors facilitating the process are: positive identification with the EU and the legitimacy of demands in light of the rewards.

**Table 18: Rationalist vs. Constructivist Institutionalism** <sup>576</sup>

As this example shows, the dichotomy between rationalist and constructivist models of explanation is highly significant when it comes to the question of how the EU interacts with member states, or in this case, with candidate countries. Given this strong compatibility with contributions from the constructivist camp, the model of Rational/Liberal Institutionalism will be taken up at another point of this study.<sup>577</sup>

### *C. Applying Integration Theory to the Baltic Sea Case – Application Patterns*

The following chapter is based on the assumption that there are two basic ways of drawing on EIT in light of the purpose of this study. These two application patterns build the analytical point of reference for this study:

<b>application pattern I</b>	Both the European integration process and Baltic Sea Regionalism are assumed instances of regional integration. Therefore, it appears viable to apply European Integration Theories directly to the Baltic Sea Case. From this angle, the BSR is treated like a sort of micro-cosmic version of the EU, meaning an integrative unit with a specific regional and territorial affiliation.
<b>application pattern II</b>	This pattern is based on the consideration that the BSR as a <i>European</i> region holds a close albeit not exclusive connection to the EU. Thus, it appears legitimate to ask for a theoretical incorporation of what could be called the meso-macro connection, with the BSR being the meso-unit and the EU building the respective macro-framework.

**Table 19: Application Patterns for the Critical Discussion of EIT in the BSR Case**

<sup>576</sup> Table generated on the basis of SEDELMEIER Ulrich: Europeanisation in new member and candidate states. In: Living Reviews in European Governance, No. 3/2006. Online publication [www.livingreviews.org](http://www.livingreviews.org) [23 December 2007].

<sup>577</sup> See chapter “Neoliberal/Rational Institutionalism”, p. 168-.

### *I. Application pattern I: The BSR – A Micro-Cosmic Version of the EU?*

A huge part of the theoretical models developed in the field of regional integration limit themselves to the specific model of *European* integration.<sup>578</sup> According to Beeson, this is mainly because nowhere regionally-based processes of integration have gone further than in post-1945 Western Europe.<sup>579</sup> These approaches have been directly inspired by the European project. Hence, in the first place, their applicability to integrative actions and processes in regional contexts other than the overall European (such as Baltic Sea Regionalism) must be questioned. The next problem results from the fact that the catchment area of the European project, as a macro-regional phenomenon, is much broader, involving both a bigger territory and a wider functional scope. Finally yet importantly, the European integration process has largely been driven by state-level actors while the phenomenon of Baltic Sea Regionalism has never been restricted to the intergovernmental sphere. Hence, can theoretical approaches to EI really explain meso-regional phenomena of regionalism? Can a European “sub-region” like the BSR be conceptually perceived as a “micro-cosmic” version of the macro-region “Europe”?

The debate about whether the EU constitutes an *n* of 1 and whether, as a consequence, inductive generalizations from the study of the EU cannot lead to generally applicable knowledge is almost as old as the study of the EU itself.<sup>580</sup>

It may be assumed that *basically*, the major paradigms in EIT, such as the two traditional opponents of functional and realist or intergovernmentalist logic of integration can be applied in the meso-regional context without distorting the analytical key message of the respective approaches. However, the significance and explanatory power is likely to be relative or limited in certain respects. The traditional theoretical approaches to European integration can probably serve as a tool to *describe* the character and the dynamics of Baltic Sea Regionalism, while their power to *explain* the process might be more restricted. In the following section, a selection of EIT approaches will be discussed in line with the above application pattern I, thus taking the Baltic Sea case as a micro-cosmic version of the European project, and applying the models produced in this very European context *directly* to the subject of this study.

#### *1. Application of Selected Approaches to the BSR Case*

The following schemes intend to illustrate the above-stated assumptions about the applicability and explanatory power of European Integration Theories by picking out some of the most prominent theoretical models. The (non-exhaustive) overview lists the leading proponent(s), offers a brief introduction to the basic claims of each theoretical model, and then provides a brief interpretation in light of the research question.

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578 Hurrell points at the problem that some approaches to regional integration claim to be generally applicable, but that eventually, all they present is a “bit more than the translation of a particular set of European experiences into a more abstract theoretical language.” HURRELL Andrew: The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): *Global Politics and Regionalism*. London 2005, pp. 38-53, here p. 38.

579 See BEESON Mark: *Re-Thinking Regionalism. Europe and East Asia in Comparative Historical Perspective*. Paper presented at the Oceanic Conference on International Studies. Canberra, 14-16 July 2004, p. 5.

580 JACHTENFUCHS Markus: *Deepening and widening integration theory*. In: *Journal of European Public Policy*. Vol. 9/4 August 2002, pp. 650-657, here p. 650.

a. *Neo-Realism*

Waltz, Morgenthau, Mearsheimer, Grieco

From a neo-realist perspective, state interests and power are the major factors to determine the development of integrative projects;<sup>581</sup> stressing the anarchical and decentralized nature of the international system and the ensuing condition of permanent power competition, regional cooperation is said to arise in reaction to an external threat or a countervailing power. States possess consistently ordered goals and select their strategies in order to achieve these goals in the largest possible measures. International cooperation involves the voluntary adjustment of state policies in a way that helps to reach a mutually desired goal. The unequal distribution of capabilities is thought to limit inter-state cooperation, since state attitude is driven by the fear of relative gains made by others.<sup>582</sup>

According to the system-level explication of cooperative integration suggested by the (neo) realist camp, Baltic Sea Regionalism could be interpreted and described as the structural undertaking of a group of states following the (natural) imperative of survival in the global political system, and trying to balance their weaknesses as either small, weak or subordinate actors. The neo-realist model does not consider any potential non-state actor; neither does it include any consideration about the nature and institutional organisation of the emerging cooperative formation. While for traditional realist thinking, regions were treated as more of an “anomaly” than a reality, Neo-Realism has difficulties to explain the existence of regions without automatically seeing them as state-centered alliance formations and as tools for nation states to further their interests. For theorists like Waltz, a world of regions does not seem to be much more than the return to a system of multi-polar balance of power.<sup>583</sup> Moreover, Neo-Realism largely fails to explain systemic changes, such as those following the end of the Cold War, as well as to consider the respective social and political challenges that emerge in similar historical situations.

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581 Both Realism and Neo-Realism cannot be perceived as classic Integration Theories in the narrow sense. From a neo-realist perspective, bodies like the EU are placed into a broad structural and systemic context of the “global political society”. The European project was largely interpreted as a response to the emergence and establishment of superpower rivalry, a reactive attitude of Europe trying to shield itself against the Communist threat. The specific internal processes have been largely neglected by neo-realist thinkers. See STONE Alec: What is a Supranational Constitution? An Essay in International Relations Theory. In: *Review of Politics* 55/3, pp. 441-474, here p. 458. The specific differences between Realism and Neo-Realism are neglected in this scheme because they do not have direct relevance for the research perspective of this study.

582 GRIECO Joseph M.: Realist Theory and the Problem of International Cooperation. Analysis with an amended Prisoner’s Dilemma Model. In: *The Journal of Politics*, No. 3/1988, pp. 600-625, here p. 600.

583 See WALTZ Kenneth: The Emerging Structure of International Politics. In: *International Security*, No. 2/1993, pp. 44-79, here p. 45.

*b. Liberal Intergovernmentalism*

Hoffmann, Moravcsik

As a “liberal modification of Realism”,<sup>584</sup> this approach has also a distinct state-centric focus and stresses the significance of relative power understood in terms of asymmetrical interdependence. However, unlike in the realist model, Liberal Intergovernmentalism (LI) does not see state interest arise from each state’s perception of its own relative power, but from a national state-society interaction (resulting in demand for integration outcomes). It holds that state preferences, rather than material power or capabilities build the primary determinant of nation state behaviour. Once the interests are formulated, they are bargained at the intergovernmental level. These bargaining procedures occur, again, between states and basing on rationalist considerations. The EC/EU treaties are seen as the key independent variable shaping the integration process. Increasing integration is perceived to materialise in big decisions; these “bargains”, again, are mainly seen as the result of shifting, and eventually, merging state preferences. Supranational institutions are perceived to be of limited importance to the overall process of integration, which is by contrast thought to be largely dominated by intra-state negotiation and bargaining. According to this model, the state also constitutes the “critical intermediary between the Commission and sub-national regimes.”<sup>585</sup>

In line with the liberal intergovernmentalist approach, regionalist processes in the BSR could be understood as the outcome of a series of rational choices made by national leaders. These choices were taken in reaction to the demands of outcomes formulated by powerful domestic constituents. The explanatory weakness of LI lies, again, in its state-centeredness and in its exclusively rationalist orientation. By focusing mainly on processes of interstate bargaining, LI offers a rather reduced, and to some extent distorted view on complex political action and development. The dominating ‘hard bargaining’ image conceals the significance of “soft” cause-effect chains that potentially emerge from “within” a trans-national region like the BSR. Moreover, LI has a particularly strong focus on the EU polity system as a type of its own (*sui generis*); this poses decisive limitations to the applicability of the approach to other than the European context.

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584 SCHMITTER Philippe C./MALAMUD Andrés: *Theorizing Regional Integration and Inter-Regional Relations*. Workshop Proposal. Florence/Lisbon 2006, p. 3. Website of the European University Institute, Florence [www.iue.it](http://www.iue.it) [22 November 2007].

585 See ANSELL Christopher K./PARSONS Craig A./DARDEN Keith A.: *Dual Networks in European Regional Policy Development*. In: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, No. 3/1997, pp. 347-375, here p. 358.

c. *Neo-Functionalism*

Haas

Neo-Functionalism places major emphasis on the role of non-state actors, which act within a supranational structure (e.g. the EU General Secretariat). Integration is perceived to be a conflictual process, in which states find themselves entangled by functional pressure. States counter this pressure by conceding a wider scope and devolving more authority to the supranational institutions they have created. Political integration is thought to be achieved through so-called spill over effects spinning off from economic and social integration. Political integration and the growth of authority at the supranational level occur as long-term consequence of modest (economic) integration. Neo-Functionalism completed the functionalist “form follows function” logic with what could be called “function follows interests”. In case of successful economic cooperation, self-interested groups of actors are drawn into the game through political spill over.<sup>586</sup> Haas defined integration as the process “whereby political actors in several, distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions process or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing nation states.”<sup>587</sup> States remain important actors, but they do not exclusively determine the direction and extent of political change. Sub-national or non-state actors are not explicitly referred to in traditional neo-functional writings; however, according to the logic of Neo-Functionalism, they would build an important ally for supranational actors, since an alliance between the two levels would progressively sideline the structural position that nation states use to have.

Even though Neo-Functionalism is – just as its opponent, Realism – state-centric in the sense that states (albeit not heads of states) do form the main type of actor, it still fails to assess how e.g. state preferences emerge and to what extent they could, in fact, hamper the flow of integration or “spill-over”. The (close to) automatic shift from economy or society based pressure for integration to the materialisation of political integration as it is suggested by the neo-functionalist model appears to have only little explanatory value for the Baltic Sea case. The pressure for integration present in the BSR after the end of the Cold War was strongly driven by state interests, since the Baltic States strived for Westernization, and thus, decided to use the regional arena in order to anticipate the effects of full integration. Applying the logic of a functional spill over to the specific development of the BSR networked structure appears difficult in that the regionalist wave emerging after 1989 did not follow any recognisable sequence in functional terms. Political integration cannot be perceived to have been anticipated by cooperation in other policy fields. The BSR development could rather be described as an emerging creative chaos of functionally intersecting and parallel cooperative formations.

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<sup>586</sup> See NIEMANN Michael: *A Spatial Approach to Regionalisms in the Global Economy*. Basingstoke 2000, p. 113.

<sup>587</sup> HAAS Ernst B.: *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957*. Stanford 1958, p. 16.

Moreover, the Baltic Sea case has not (yet) experienced the creation of any supranational body or institution, and thus, lacks an important factor that is usually referred to in Neo-Functionalism. In fact, Baltic Sea Regionalism does not seem to be moving into the direction of progressive “deepening” in neo-functionalist terms.

*d. Multi-Level Governance*

Kohler-Koch, Jachtenfuchs, Marks, Hooghe

During the 1980s, and most particularly, after the end of the Cold War, EIT gradually shifted away from the exclusive focus on integration processes and the general development of the European project; academia started to focus on the nature of the Union and its governance structure, i.e. its institutional specificities and the specific nature of its polity. Analysts of the governance strand of EIT largely perceive decision-making competencies as shared by actors at different levels rather than monopolized by national governments. The interactions between them are non-hierarchical and lacking a central, predominant authority.

Governance is the production of authoritative decisions, which are not produced by a simple hierarchical structure [...] but instead arise from the interaction of a plethora of public and private, collective and individual actors.<sup>588</sup>

Models of collective decision-making among states (such as the EU) are thought to involve a significant loss of control for national governments. Multi-level governance theorists largely claim that, rather than conceptualising regional policy as a national issue in which the lead role is taken by national institutions, it should be identified as an arena in which the EU plays an integral role in policy-making, together with the regional authorities and the central national institutions. In contrast to ‘government’, the concept of ‘governance’ is not restricted to the formal structures of state authority. It covers a wider notion of politics, including the production, accumulation and regulation of collective goods at all levels, the sub-national, national, and international or supranational level.<sup>589</sup> From this point of view, political arenas are rather loosely interconnected than tightly nested. Sub-national actors operate in both national and supranational arenas. Triadic alliances between the sub-national, national and supranational level shift, depending on immediate interests.<sup>590</sup>

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588 CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/FØLLESDAL Andreas/PIATTONI Simona: Informal Governance in the European Union. An Introduction. In: CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/PIATTONI Simona (eds): *Informal Governance in the European Union*. Cheltenham/Northampton 2003, pp. 1-21, here p. 6. See also JACHTENFUCHS Markus: *Democracy and Governance in the European Union*. In: *European Integration Online Papers (EIoP)*, No. 2/1997.

589 See MARSH David/FURLONG Paul: *A Skin not a Sweater. Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science*. In: MARSH David/STOKER Gerry (eds): *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. London 2001, pp. 17-41, here p. 37.

590 See HOOGHE Liesbet/MARKS Gary: *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*. Lanham 2001, p. 47.

Due to its broad analytical orientation and its comprehensiveness, the notion of (multi-level) Governance has been termed “one of the most acceptable labels one can stick on the contemporary EU.”<sup>591</sup> In fact, the descriptive neutrality of governance approaches has enhanced its compatibility with existing theoretical models, and thus, contributed to its relative popularity all across the field of European integration studies. The governance focus addresses both empirical and normative questions, and thus, not least helps to bridge the gap between old paradigmatic divides in integration theory.<sup>592</sup> What seems significant for the purpose of this study is that Governance approaches not only describe the dispersion of authoritative competence across territorial levels but that they also draw particular attention to the interconnection of multilevel political arenas in the process of governing. While state-centric approaches to integration suggest a strict separation between domestic and international politics, the Governance strain assumes the existence of a multi-level or poly-centric structure that involves political interaction across all levels. The focus on polity at various different levels, or rather across various political action layers, meets an important specificity of the Baltic Sea case. The numerous types of actors involved in the process of regional and trans-regional interaction call for this kind of multi-layered perspective. However, most models developed under the label of multi-level governance remain largely indifferent towards the question of why individual actors choose to collaborate, and of how interests impact on the course of governance interaction.

*e. Neoliberal/Rational Institutionalism*

Keohane

Emerging from the strand of philosophical ‘structuralism’ and drawing on interdependence theory, Neoliberal or Rational Institutionalism mainly insists on the importance of institutions and regimes in the structure of the international system and emphasises their influence on the behaviour of various actors. In short, the general rationale of this approach could be subsumed with the slogan that ‘institutions matter.’ It accepts the neo-realist image of the international system as a regulated anarchy with no central authority but it rejects the neo-realist assumption that the systemic structure determines the political conduct of states. The structure of the system can influence state behaviour, but states can also influence structures by building institutions.<sup>593</sup> The empirical starting point is the increasing interdependence in the international system. Trans-national challenges necessitate coordination, which results in the build-up of regimes (institutionalization).

591 SCHMITTER Philippe C./MALAMUD Andrés: Theorizing Regional Integration and Inter-Regional Relations. Workshop Proposal. Florence/Lisbon 2006, p. 4. Website of the European University Institute, Florence [www.iue.it](http://www.iue.it) [22 November 2007].

592 See MELCHIOR Josef: New Spaces of European Governance. Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): New Spaces of European Governance. Vienna 2006, pp. 7-18, here p. 7.

593 See JOHANSSON Elisabeth: EU and its Near Neighbourhood: Subregionalization in the Baltic Sea and in the Mediterranean. In: WILLA Pierre/LEVRAT Nicolas (eds): Actors and Models. Assessing the European Union’s External Capability and Influence. Genève 2001, pp. 200-222, here p. 210.

Cooperation helps to achieve certain strategic goals, which might partly also be shared by the actors involved. According to this approach, the emergence of loose regimes is more likely, and significantly more efficient than the creation of supra-national structures. The nation state retains considerable influence in both policy initiative and decision-making.<sup>594</sup>

Neoliberal Institutionalism appears to provide a comprehensive explanatory pattern for instances of regional integration as apparent in the BSR. While treating nation states as ‘rational egoists’<sup>595</sup> and ‘effective gatekeepers’<sup>596</sup> between the domestic and the international system, the approach does still not exclude the possibility that they are potentially ready, willing and able to engage in sustained cooperation. Neoliberal institutionalists rather argue that the management of (common) problems by way of cooperation may strengthen the role of the state involved. Interestingly, the approach puts power constellations, interests and preferences of states at the very heart of its research, focussing on what enhances and what constrains cooperative attitudes. The emergence and extension of cooperative networks is not perceived to be reflecting an alleged harmony of interests nor does it give clear evidence about growing economic interdependence. Cooperative regionalisation rather indicates national self-interest in

- the simplification of processes;
- the facilitation of interstate negotiation processes as well as
- the constructive management of competitive dynamics.

According to this logic of action, states try to foster linkages across certain policy areas of interests by negotiating packages; they profit from the outcomes of cooperation in the sense that transaction costs for action on the international or global scene are being reduced. While the preconditions underlying this argumentation highly comply with the analytical exigencies posed herein, the explicit focus on the nation state must, once again, be seen as a major drawback of this approach. Neoliberal Institutionalism does not consider the possibility of the nation state to become undermined by respective processes of regionalisation. Subregional cooperative interaction, be it on intergovernmental or non-official grounds, might possibly lead to the formation and establishment of informal transnational bureaucratic networks and alliances. This might entail the development of new forms of identity ranging both above and below the territorially confined state level, events that are largely not covered by the neoliberal institutionalist perspective.<sup>597</sup>

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594 See *ibid.*, here p. 211.

595 The notion of states being “rational egoists in a self-help world” has been taken over from the neo-realist camp. See MEARSHEIMER John: *The False Promise of International Institutions*. In: *International Security*, No.3/Winter 1994-1995, pp. 5-49, here p. 23.

596 See POLLACK Mark A.: *Theorizing the European Union*. *International Organization*, Domestic Polity, or Experiment in New Governance? In: *Annual Review of Political Science*, No. 8/2005, pp. 357-398, here p. 383.

597 See HURRELL Andrew: *Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics*. In: *Review of International Studies*, No. 2/1995, pp. 331-358, here p. 349.



## 2. *Excursus: Social Constructivism*

### a. *The Discursive Construction of Regions*

Since a couple of years, in Political Science, and most notably, in European Integration Studies, it has become *bon ton* to argue on constructivist grounds. Drawing on the large array of constructivist analyses generated in the field of psychology, sociology or linguistics, many political scientists have started to base their considerations about European integration on the general assumption that all social and political phenomena could be regarded as discursively constructed. These tendencies are often referred to as emerging from an academic community based in the Danish capital, the so-called Copenhagen School.<sup>598</sup> Social constructivist models have been among the most popular, and arguably, among the most contested approaches in the “New Europe”.

[Social] Constructivism has been explained, applied, positioned. It has been celebrated by some and dismissed by others. Whatever one’s view on the matter, constructivism has become increasingly difficult to avoid.<sup>599</sup>

In the 1990s, Social Constructivism has literally flooded the field of EIT. Notions like ‘the social construction of...’ are, as Katzenstein et al. put it, “littering the title pages of our books, articles and student assignments as did ‘the political economy of...’ in the 1980s.”<sup>600</sup> The US sociologists Berger and Luckman can be called the pioneer thinkers of Social Constructivism. The box offers some of their most popular and influential quotes, which coined masses of studies on European and regional integration.<sup>601</sup>

Reality is a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition; we cannot wish them away. (p. 1)

Different objects present themselves to consciousness as constituents of different spheres of reality. My consciousness is capable of moving through different spheres of reality. [...] I am conscious of the world as consisting of multiple realities. (p. 21)

It is important to keep in mind that the objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity. The process by which the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity is objectivation. The reality of everyday life is not only filled with objectivations; it is only possible because of them. (p. 35).

Any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort and which, ipso facto, is apprehended by its performer as that pattern. This is the process of habitualization. (p. 53)

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598 Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver are among the most prominent exponents of the Copenhagen School.

599 ZEHFUSS Maja: Constructivism and Identity. A Dangerous Liaison. In: European Journal of International Relations, No. 3/2001, pp. 315-348, here p. 315.

600 See KATZENSTEIN Peter/KEOHANE Robert O./KRASNER Stephen D.: International Organization and the Study of World Politics. In: International Organization, No. 4/1998, pp. 645-685, here p. 645.

601 BERGER Peter/LUCKMAN Thomas: The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. New York 1966. Exact location of the respective phrase given in brackets.

This habitualization precedes institutionalization. Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. (p. 54).

Identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between the individual and society. Identity types, on the other hand, are social products tout court, relatively stable elements of objective social reality [...]. (p. 174)

**Table 20: Berger and Luckman: Key quotations of Constructivism**

The constructivist movement that captured the field of Integration Theory in the intermediate Post Cold War situation reverted to most of these seminal arguments about the nature and quality of society and more generally, of social reality. Since then, many different interpretations and variations of Social Constructivism have emerged. The perception of language and of its role and significance in research constituted an important point of reference for the development of different camps of Constructivism. Constructivist approaches were largely based on Wittgenstein's interpretation of language that did not perceive the meaning of words to consist in their corresponding objects in the 'outer world', but in their specific use in political or social discourse. From this shared philosophical basis, Constructivism has roughly developed into two specific ways of interpretation. The sociological (or interpretative) constructivist perspective, also called 'Constructive Realism', mainly studies the impact of norms on actors' identities, interests and behaviour, and stresses the importance of empirical work in order to approach the world "out there".<sup>602</sup> According to this interpretation, the 'outer world' is perceived to exist beyond the theorist's view; the constructive power of language is limited to the context of political arguing and persuasion.

[Sociological] Constructivism does not deny the existence of a phenomenal world, external to thought. This is the world of brute facts. It does oppose, and this is something different, that phenomena can constitute themselves as objects of knowledge independently of discursive practices. It does not challenge the possible thought-independent existence of (in particular natural) phenomena, but it challenges their language-independent observation.<sup>603</sup>

The more radical interpretation of Constructivism, also called 'Critical' or 'Constructive Idealism', does not assume any objective world but rather seeks to identify the way the *world* is constructed.<sup>604</sup> According to this perspective, the material realities are no more 'real' than the discursive realities, as they do not exist independently as such.

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602 According to the perspective of Constructive Realism, the agent has an epistemic but not an ontological influence on the world, meaning that knowledge is constructive in nature, but the existence of the world does not depend on the existence of a (constructing) agent. See CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: Journal of European Public Policy 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 531. For more details, see also CHECKEL Jeffrey T.: Constructivist Approaches to European Integration. ARENA Working Paper, May 2006. Oslo 2006, p. 6.

603 GUZZINI Stefano: A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations. In: European Journal of International Relations, No. 2/2000, pp. 147-182, here p. 159.

604 The agent has both an epistemic and an ontological influence on the known world, meaning that the existence of the world is just as dependent as any other constructed reality. See CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: Journal of European Public Policy 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 531.

In short: neither aspect can be detached from the influence of the other. From this point of view, speech is not merely symbolic action. Language is seen to constitute meaning and to be inherently related to the establishment of rules within specific contexts. This approach suggests that a speech act, if performed successfully, produces a specific meaning or normative construct that, in turn, leads to rule-following.<sup>605</sup> Language is seen as much more than simply a 'neutral' instrument or medium used for expression and the exchange of information; it is the very resource base that is able to determine political legitimacy and power.

Discourse analysis employed for these study purposes becomes "research on regularities and function of linguistic resources", with the notion of "regularities" stressing the non-occasional nature of statements. Political utterances are perceived as "structuralized and strategically employed systems of meaning-giving."<sup>606</sup> While this rigid version denies any sort of innate feature in the social or human world, "lighter versions" make do with stressing the significance of value-related dynamics in political discourse. However, in essence, all variations of Social Constructivism can be said to perceive every social or human phenomenon as, *at least* to some extent, discursively created and thus, virtually constructed through processes of discursive interaction.

Constructivism is the view that the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world.<sup>607</sup>

In essence, the "constructivist game" consists in de-constructing and unpacking political discourse, trying to identify the normative factors that dominate and form political action and development.<sup>608</sup> While the dominant schools of thought in IRT used (and still use) to take these normative factors as naturally or rather, as exogenously given and beyond the scope of analysis, Social Constructivism explicitly addresses the dynamics of identity constitution, construction and formation in international politics. In doing so, arguably, Constructivism has tried to produce a theoretical alternative to the neo-realist or functionalist paradigms.

Constructivism emerged as an approach to break the stalemate that the mainstream debate ended in. Its critiques of mainstream scholarship focus on what it takes for granted or ignores. Constructivism studies the sources and the content of state interests and preferences, which are postulated, and it emphasizes the ideational and social side of international politics, which is ignored by the mainstream scholarship.<sup>609</sup>

Social constructivist arguments have also become very common and popular in recent studies about Baltic Sea Regionalism. Countless contributions on the discursive

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605 See CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: Journal of European Public Policy 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 535.

606 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-Making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 360.

607 ADLER Emanuel: Seizing the Middle Ground. Constructivism in World Politics. In: European Journal of International Relations, No. 3/1997, pp. 319-363, here p. 322.

608 See TASSINARI Fabrizio: Mare Europaeum. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe. Copenhagen 2004, p. 82.

609 ULUSOY Hasan: Revising Security Communities After the Cold War. The Constructivist Approach. In: Perceptions. Journal of International Affairs, September-November 2003, p. 7.

construction of the BSR have mushroomed since the early 1990s. Many of these constructivist interpretations largely appeal to the Region-Building Approach (RBA) that – just in line with the main social constructivist argument – perceives regions as discursively constructed entities that are consciously constituted in the framework of specific political region-building projects. The so-called “classic” RBA was developed by Iver B. Neumann, a political scientist based in Oslo/Norway.<sup>610</sup> The main difference of the RBA perspective on regionness or regions from other more traditional approaches to the analysis of regionalism lies in the fact that not the region itself is being analysed but rather the way the specific “regionness” is placed in political discourse.<sup>611</sup>

<b>descriptive</b>	<b>Geopolitical approach</b> definition of the region according to external factors, such as natural landmarks or state borders;	<b>Constructivist RBA</b> emphasises the patterns and ways the geopolitical and cultural “facts” are selected and strategically rearranged in the region-building discourse.	<b>analytical</b>
	<b>Cultural approach</b> definition of the region according to its specific “domestic” or cultural nature, e.g. distinguishing features, common heritage;		

*Table 21: Descriptive and Analytical Approaches to Regions*

While both the cultural and the geopolitical approach treat the existence of a region as given, the constructivist view focuses exactly on *how* the region is being generated (“constructed”); it looks at the process of the constitution and/or the perpetual genesis of regions.<sup>612</sup> The analysis is focussed on the political arguments that are used to promote regionalism; these arguments avail themselves of the “raw material” offered by geography, history and culture. In essence, the RBA tries to identify which external and internal factors are being deployed in order to justify, and thus, to construct a region. While assuming that “regions are talked and written into existence”, the RBA tries to identify<sup>613</sup>

- how and on what grounds the existence of a region was postulated,
- which actors perpetuate its existence,
- which strategies they apply for that purpose,
- how analysts of regions transport their knowledge to the community by either including or excluding certain aspects or factors relevant for the region.<sup>614</sup>

610 NEUMANN Iver B.: *Regions in International Relations Theory. The Case for a Region-Building Approach*. Oslo 1992. And NEUMANN Iver B.: *A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe*. In: *Review of International Studies*, No. 20/1994, pp. 53-74.

611 Table generated on the basis of NEUMANN Iver B.: *Uses of the Other. “The East” in European Identity*. Manchester 1999, pp. 120-121.

612 See NEUMANN Iver B.: *Regions in International Relations Theory. The Case for a Region-Building Approach*. Oslo 1992, p. 35.

613 See NEUMANN Iver B.: *A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe*. In: *Review of International Studies*, No. 20/1994, pp. 53-74, here p. 59.

614 NEUMANN Iver B.: *Uses of the Other. “The East” in European Identity*. Manchester 1999, pp. 41.

The existence of regions is preceded by the existence of region-builders, political actors who, as part of some political project, imagine a spatial and chronological identity for a region, and disseminate this imagined identity to others.<sup>615</sup>

In its rigid version the line of argumentation of the RBA could go as far to claim that specific actors pursuing the objective of building or ‘constructing’ a region, so called ‘region-builders’, strategically avail themselves of this ‘raw material’ in order to ‘manipulate the inter-subjective understanding of regions.’ If these region-builders succeed in communicating the regional identity and togetherness that supports their political objectives best, they eventually achieve the materialisation of their promoted vision, which is mostly, tangible transactions and governance structures, ideally based on individual or collective emotional attachments.<sup>616</sup> History is, as pointed out before, a very popular tool for the promotion and normative justification of regionalist visions or region-building projects, since it offers many value-laden arguments that suggest the existence of an innate regional identity. Schäfer emphasises the close relation between the process of region-building and the one of identity formation.

The identity of the region and the region itself are continually constructed in discourses through a demarcation of the self against the other. Therefore, the policy-makers who construct the identity of the BSR by means of their discursive practices also construct the region as a whole.<sup>617</sup>

The underlying constructivist claim of the classic RBA – that discourses are the very constituents of space – has also offered the analytical basis for critical geographers, often called “critical geopolitologists”.<sup>618</sup> Ó Tuathail, one of the founding fathers of Critical Geography, stresses the power of mentally constructed spaces as follows:

There is no such thing as neutral geography. Geography is about power. Although often assumed to be innocent, the geography of the world is not a product of nature but a product of histories of struggle between competing authorities over the power to organize, occupy, and administer space.<sup>619</sup>

In fact, these early contributions from “outside” the Political Science community constituted a seminal source of inspiration for respective approaches in integration theory, and more generally, in European Studies. Academic debates about “bordering and re-bordering Europe”, the “European territoriality” or “spatiality” and “regionness”

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615 NEUMANN Iver B.: A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe. In: Review of International Studies, No. 20/1994, pp. 53-74, here p. 58.

616 See ENGELN Hilde Dominique: The Construction of a Region in the Baltic Sea Area. Geneva 2004, p. 14.

617 SCHÄFER Imke: Region-Building and Identity Formation in the Baltic Sea Region. In: The Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies, Nr. 1/2005, pp. 45-69, here p. 65.

618 See e.g. TAYLOR Peter J./FLINT Colin (eds): Political Geography. World-Economy, Nation-State and Locality. Essex 2000. And Ó TUATHAIL Gearóid: The Language and Nature of the “New” Geopolitics: The Case of US-El Salvador Relations. In: Political Geography Quarterly, No. 5/1986, pp. 73-85. And BEREZIN Mabel/SCHAIN Martin (eds): Europe Without Borders. Remapping Territory, Citizenship and Identity in a Transnational Age. Baltimore 2003. And Ó TUATHAIL Gearóid/DALBY Simon/ROUTLEDGE Paul (eds): The Geopolitics Reader. New York 2006.

619 Ó TUATHAIL Gearóid: Critical Geopolitics. The Politics of Writing Global Space. London 1996, p. 1.

have entered the field at a rather late point.<sup>620</sup> The Eastern enlargement and the discussion about a European Neighbourhood Policy as some sort of *Ersatz* enlargement appears to have sparked politological interest in these questions.<sup>621</sup> Pirjo Jurakainen has produced an illustrative example of how a constructivist framework can be employed in order to analyse and characterise Baltic Sea Regionalism. She sets out to explain the “discursive spatial construction of Northernness” by analysing the respective political debate in the context of a Nordic Journal, the *Nord Revy*, thus, making methodical use of content analysis.<sup>622</sup> Her choice of the journal was based on the fact that in the late 1990s, the *Nord Revy* had proved to be an attractive political forum for what she calls “the constructors of Northernness” that were “mastering northern space”, a group of activist individuals not only including academics and politicians but also other players from the private and civic sector. Interestingly, Jukarainen also points at the fact that the main exponents of Social Constructivism, among others Wæver, themselves actively contributed to the process of “talking the region into existence.”<sup>623</sup> The following considerations build the starting point of her analysis:

For at least three decades, starting from the 1960s, the dominant spatial representation of ‘Northernness’ used to be ‘Norden’. [...] The newly emerging eastwards-oriented and Europeanised ‘Northernness’ is more reminiscent of a complex and multilevel spatial network than a clearly delimited, homogeneous territory ‘between the two blocks’. [...] The ‘North’ is beginning to exhibit a number of late-modern features. It is less territorial and has many layers and possible directions for future development.<sup>624</sup>

Following the constructivist traits of the RBA, Jukarainen treats “spaces as politically constructed, whilst discourses are seen as the very constituents of space.”<sup>625</sup>

Socially constructed ‘Northernness’ is like a constantly running videotape, out of which individual ‘still pictures’, that is to say specific contextual representations, can be taken and ‘frozen’ for more thorough analysis. These ‘still-pictures’ or ‘takes’ of ‘Northernness’, even if ordered sequentially, cannot, however, describe the whole movie’, though they can function as useful markers for deeper study. This examination of common ‘grounds’ is possible because these ‘takes’ of ‘Northernness’ all originate from the same complex network of discourses.<sup>626</sup>

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620 See BROWNING Christopher S. (ed.): *Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements*. Aldershot 2005. And CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/PETITO Fabio/TONRA Ben (eds): *Fuzzy Politics around Fuzzy Borders. The European Union’s ‘Near Abroad’*. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 4/December 2000, pp. 389-415. And CHRISTIANSEN Thomas: *Towards Statehood? The EU’s move towards Constitutionalisation and Territorialisation*. In: *Centre for European Studies*. University of Oslo (ed.): *ARENA Working Paper*, No. 21, August 2005.

621 For details on this ‘spatial turn’, see RUMFORD Chris: *Rethinking European Spaces. Territory, Borders, Governance*. In: *Comparative European Politics*, No. 4/2006, pp. 127-140.

622 See JUKARAINEN Pirjo: *Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal*. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 359.

623 See NEUMANN Iver B.: *A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe*. In: *Review of International Studies*, No. 20/1994, pp. 53-74, here p. 59.

624 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: *Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal*. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 355.

625 *Ibid.*, here p. 359.

626 *Ibid.*, here p. 359.

Jukarainen suggests viewing the structure of the region as some sort of “discursive network” where discursive ‘texts’ (speeches, writings, maps, pictures and other types of representative material) are passively describing or reflecting what the northern space ‘really’ is, but are instead sources of activism that virtually construct a particular kind of discourse. She offers the following figure to depict the nature of this web of discourses.

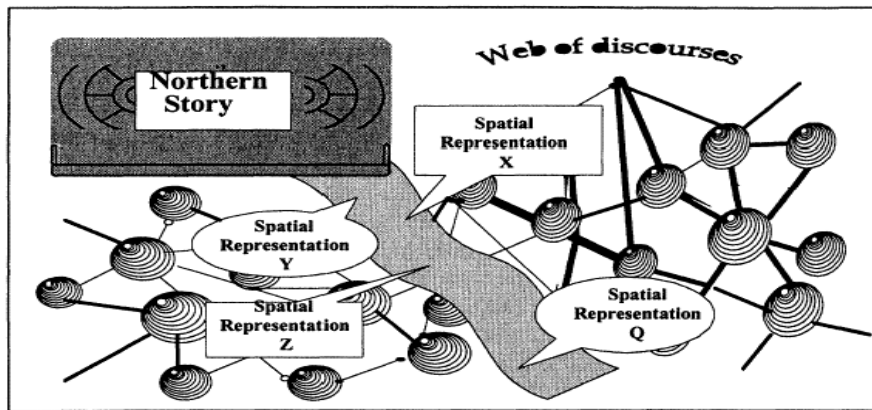


Figure 6: Multifform Northernness, Generated by Pirjo Jukarainen

The process of discursive construction occurs in both the political and the social context,

- social: the construction takes place intersubjectively, i.e. among various actors or social agents. The process could even be said to occur on trans-subjective grounds, since the individual contribution is eventually being merged;<sup>627</sup>
- political: the discursive actors compete over dominant positions. This consideration raises the significance of power relations between the single parties involved.<sup>628</sup>

The occurring region-building discourses are not organised in a fully predictable manner; rather than following a certain deterministic and linear development, they together form a “complex network with multiple development dimensions” meeting on either competing or complementary grounds.<sup>629</sup> The model also provides for the consideration of so-called “nodal points” or “condensations of dominance”, meaning places where several discourses meet and potentially get linked to each other. These “condensations” allow the emergence of a certain “legitimate position” which makes them fairly consistent and durable.<sup>630</sup> When it comes to the analytical identification of the “agents in charge” of discursive construction and their respective political or politico-strategic motivation, Jukarainen remains modest about the expressiveness of her model, stating that tracing the discoursing actors and their political motivation in greater detail might be “difficult if not entirely impossible.”<sup>631</sup>

627 See ibd., here p. 360.

628 See ibd., here p. 361.

629 See ibd., here p. 361.

630 See Jukarainen citing DIEZ Thomas: *Die EU lesen. Diskursive Knotenpunkte in der britischen Europadebatte*. Mannheim 1997.

631 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 362.

Therefore, this analysis leaves the question of the ‘ultimate origin’ of change to one side, instead focusing on the substance of the processes of social and spatial change; [and addressing questions like] what kind of space is/was *Norden*?<sup>632</sup>

This inherent process orientation is largely symptomatic for analyses conducted on social constructivist grounds. The political process takes centre stage while the actor’s role is reduced to the function of a discursive creator without further questioning or elaborating on the motivational level or the background of interests and power bargains. The contributions arising from the “spatial” – and largely constructivist – wave in EIT, with Jukarainen being a prime example, have certainly been significant to the extent that they have added a new perspective to challenge the mainstream debate. Despite high hopes for the constructivist venture – “hopes that any open-minded social scientist in the field must share”<sup>633</sup> – it appears fruitful just as much as necessary to discuss a series of arguments that other theoretical camps are holding *against* the approach, challenging, in turn, its alleged explanatory power and self-stated ambitions.

*b. Why the Explanatory Power of Constructivism Remains Low*

The so-called “constructivist turn” in EIT – an expression that evokes the qualities of a methodological or technical revolution – has put forth a huge bulk of empirical work. By explicitly presenting themselves as some sort of premature contenders that aim to challenge a wide array of consistently developed and established traditional approaches to integration, constructivists have certainly exposed themselves to the methodological standard procedures of external testing. Social Constructivism has received harsh critics by several analysts, while others have repeatedly emphasised that it is still struggling to define its form.<sup>634</sup>

However, asking constructivists what substantively new insights they have on European integration is not a sign of indecent positivism that a good constructivist can safely ignore.<sup>635</sup>

So why let us not pose the “intriguing and timely question”:<sup>636</sup> What has constructivist theory contributed to our social scientific understanding of the EU, and more generally, of the European integration process?

Early contributions from the constructivist camp had a distinctly defensive tone, preferring to define the very theoretical orientation as rather what it is *not* about and in what respect it is *different* from existing theoretical paradigms.

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632 Ibid., here p. 362.

633 MORAVCSIK Andrew: ‘Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?’ Constructivism and European Integration. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 669-681, here p. 670.

634 See in particular RISSE Thomas/WIENER Antje: ‘Something Rotten’ and the Social Construction of Social Constructivism. A Comment on Comments. In: *Journal of European Public Policy*, No. 5/1999, pp. 775-782.

635 JACHTENFUCHS Markus: Deepening and Widening Integration Theory. In: *Journal of European Public Policy*, No. 9/2002, pp. 650-657, here p. 653.

636 See MORAVCSIK Andrew: ‘Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?’ Constructivism and European Integration. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 669-681, here p. 669.



Constructivism can be characterized *ex negativo*, that is, by reference to what it is not.<sup>637</sup>

This predication, uttered by a group of scholars that overtly refer to themselves as “constructivists”, could easily be developed into

Constructivism can be characterized by reference to what it does not *want to be*.

That is, to make it short: rationalist. Arguments about “what Constructivism can do”, and in turn, what Rationalism “is not able to explain” (or even see), constituted an important element in what could be called the first attempts of Constructivism to justify its own existence. This discursive act of “othering” Rationalism appeared to have even an identity forming effect for the constructivist community emerging in the course of the 1990s. Christiansen et al. offered a sequence of flaming affirmations that reflect this argumentative attitude.

While rationalists often dismiss ‘merely symbolic’ discourse, the theory of communicative action [Note: Constructivism] enables analysis of these otherwise forgotten dimensions of policy-making. [...] Neglecting the constructive force of the process itself, i.e. pushing intersubjective phenomena, and social context aside, lays the ground for missing out on a crucial part of the process. If the process is to be explained, it cannot be done with a research context that is closed towards interpretative tools.<sup>638</sup>

While this will to distance themselves from their traditional theoretical predecessors may be largely understandable, confusingly, the very same constructivists have claimed only a few instants earlier that Constructivism plays “the role of a mediator” between classic Rationalism and more reflectivist perspectives. They claim to be located in the “middle ground” between the two major opposing paradigms in IRT to then again present themselves as a, or actually *the single* best, alternative to Rationalism, and thus, to any theoretical model classic integration theory has put forth.<sup>639</sup>

The rationalist position can easily be subsumed within a constructivist perspective which, however, can offer much more, since it is based on a deeper and broader ontology.<sup>640</sup>

Constructivist monologues about the ontological superiority of this very meta-theoretical approach have been very prominent tools in the course of the respective theoretical debate. Constructivists generally lay ambitious claims to the explanatory power of their own analytical model.

Constructivism is a social theory that is ‘applicable’ across disciplines which therefore helps us to transcend recurring inter-disciplinary squabbles, be it IR vs. comparative politics or IR vs. European studies.<sup>641</sup>

Furthermore, social constructivism has the potential to counter tendencies towards excessive specialization in studies of European integration, tendencies to know more and more about less and less.<sup>642</sup>

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637 CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: Journal of European Public Policy 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 531.

638 CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: Journal of European Public Policy 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 541.

639 See *ibid.*, p. 532.

640 See *ibid.*, here p. 533 and 536.

641 *Ibid.*, here p. 531.

One of the major contributions of constructivist approaches is to include the impact of norms and ideas on the construction of identities and behaviour.<sup>643</sup>

Constructivists openly challenge the general explanatory power and analytical capacity of both traditional IRT and Comparative Theories.

It is the constructivist project of critically examining transformatory processes of integration rather than the rationalist debate between intergovernmentalists (implicitly assuming that there is no fundamental change) and comparativists (implicitly assuming that fundamental change has already occurred), which will be moving the study of European integration forward.<sup>644</sup>

However, to what extent does Social Constructivism really live up to its own stated intents? In order to discuss this question in view of a more specific case in point we can come back to the exemplary social constructivist analysis produced by Jukarainen, which was aimed to “explain the discursive spatial construction of Northernness”.<sup>645</sup> Jukarainen mainly focused on the identification of dominant discursive patterns, which she then perceives to be clustering in the form of “nodal points” or “condensations of dominance”.<sup>646</sup> These dominant discursive motives that appear to be constituting the spatial image of “Northernness” are then compared to what “old Nordicity” is perceived to entail. “Old *Norden*” is defined as a “system of interstate cooperation between the Nordic States within the Nordic Council”, whereas “contemporary South-eastern Euro-North” is said to involve “cooperation, conflict and competition within and beyond (!) [original emphasis] states, regions, cities, and localities.”<sup>647</sup>

The social constructivist eye is largely focused on the *process* of change, on how discursive patterns are shifted and what new images are being employed in order to construct equally “new” spatial entities. Since the specific role of the actor and the influence of strategic interests is perceived “impossible to trace”, Jukarainen – in a very typical social constructivist manner – tries to find the reasons for change in another context. Rationalist factors like the (potentially short-term) impact of conscious and strategic nation state choices are systematically excluded from the explanation. Change is rather perceived to occur on procedural grounds, meaning a decent and long-stretched change with diffuse and indefinite origins. Instead of trying to trace the source of policy innovation in contemporary political practice (in this case, post Cold War practice), Jukarainen eventually seeks to blur the alleged change that built the basis and point of departure for her analysis.

Comparing the two notions [note: the ‘old North’ and the ‘contemporary Northernness’] there has been a complete change. We could say that not only the ‘video’ on play now

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642 CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 531.

643 *Ibid.*, here p. 532.

644 *Ibid.*, here p. 537.

645 See JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 359. And chapter “The Discursive Construction of Regions”, p. 170-.

646 See *ibid.*, here p. 361. Referring to DIEZ Thomas: *Die EU lesen. Diskursive Knotenpunkte in der britischen Europadebatte*. Mannheim 1997.

647 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden in a Nordic Journal. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 376.

consists of new kinds of ‘still pictures’ (meaning spatial imaginations), but more radically perhaps it even seemed to be in need of a completely new name. [...] It is fair to suggest, however, that the diversification did not occur over a short period of time. Even during the former period characterized as ‘Nordic times’ there was much more going on than merely interstate cooperation. For instance, transnationally (note: not internationally) oriented firms had their cooperative links and networks transcending state boundaries long before the ‘end’ of the ideological juxtaposition.<sup>648</sup>

With this argument and one of her major conclusions, Jukarainen not only relativises the significance of the change she has been scrutinising, she also dilutes her own analytical findings by drawing fairly vague and fuzzy conclusions. While the analysis of political and political scientist discourse as it has occurred in the context of a *Norden*-based journal has brought significant and highly remarkable discoveries about the argumentative tools and spatial images that were employed in this context, the concluding interpretation clearly lacked distinct explanatory factors or independent variables that could have structured the production of significant analytical outcomes. While arguably, it might not be appropriate to take one single social constructivist study in order to criticise the underlying theoretical model that (obviously) has wider conceptual implications, there are a few tendencies in Jukarainen’s chain of argumentation that could be identified as the major weaknesses that Social Constructivism can be taunted for. This is where I join in the criticism by Moravcsik who identified “a characteristic unwillingness” in constructivists “to place their claims at any real risk of empirical disconfirmation.”<sup>649</sup>

Generally, the methodological foundation of Constructivism, if ever it goes beyond mere creative and eloquent reasoning about discursively subjected ‘raw material’, appears rather banal. It could be argued that most findings that constructivist studies lead to, have not been detected *because* of the alleged thinking pattern constructivism offers, but because the respective researcher succeeded in tracking motives and political objectives in every day discourse that give information about the background or strategic intention of a certain phenomenon, event or behaviour. Some of these analysts would probably also be good historians, since they show a lot of stamina when it comes to the study of fragments and splinters in current political affairs. One positive example in this respect is Leena-Kaarina Williams, whose findings offer a significant insight into the early history of Baltic Sea Regionalism.<sup>650</sup> Williams has simply taken the effort of searching the local archives in the German *Bundesland* of Schleswig-Holstein, looking for empirical evidence to support her assumption about the virtual constructedness of the “Baltic Sea” notion. The constructivist framework made her doing just that: considering as many details as possible by scanning the material that contributed, in Neumann’s words, to “speaking and writing the region into existence.”<sup>651</sup>

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648 Ibid., here p. 376.

649 MORAVCSIK Andrew: ‘Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?’ Constructivism and European Integration. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 669-681, here p. 670.

650 WILLIAMS Leena-Kaarina: Post-modern and intergovernmental paradigms of Baltic Sea co-operation between 1988 and 1992. The Genesis of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as a historical case study. In: *NORDEUROPA Forum* 1/2005, pp. 3-20.

651 NEUMANN Iver B.: A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe. In: *Review of International Studies*, No. 20/1994, pp. 53-74, here p. 59.

However, Social Constructivism seems not to be about more than the simple claim that “identity matters” or, to add the methodological key message, “discourse matters”. The core argumentative line of Constructivism barely indicates a working strategy, but does not solve or *explain* any social problem or phenomenon. While Constructivism set out to criticise Neo-Realism and Neo-Functionalism for having neglected half of the truth, Constructivism in turn has to be blamed for its absolute focus on the discursive process. Constructivist studies on the BSR happen to be fruitfully descriptive. However, many of them never reach the point of conclusory reasoning about independent variables.

Taking an abstract example: Region-builder A constructed regional vision X. He availed himself of argument Y and Z, perverting cliché XX in order to idealise and blandish the “real” objectives underlying the promoted vision X. Nice story plot, but what does this tell us about the priorities, interests and objectives of A? Discourse analysis, as a working method often suggested by constructivists, could probably lead us to the answer. But then, the merit goes to the patient observer or researcher, and cannot be ascribed to the theoretical framework of analysis. If Constructivism suggests to identify how regions are “written and spoken” into existence, what is really innovative about this idea?

That de Gaulle had very particular views on European integration or on French national security is not an exciting new constructivist discovery. Nor is it very surprising that there have been many plans for the institutional shape of the EU, some which became politically relevant whereas others did not.<sup>652</sup>

The thorough analysis of both written and “other” sources (in the widest sense of the term) is an established part of every day work in history science; and so it is the case for other disciplines such as sociology or psychology.

The social constructivist approach to regional integration is really not much more than some kind of lip-service paid to an approach that is now well developed in other fields such as sociology, psychology and linguistics.<sup>653</sup>

Maybe this sort of criticism can be decisively disarmed by simply pointing at the fact that Constructivism in European Studies and more generally, in IR analysis, is not employed to offer an integral theoretical framework for a specific social or political phenomenon. As Tassinari defined the “constructivist game”, its rules are not as formally given as in most grand theories such as in the realist or functionalist strain; they rather depend “on how social reality displays itself”, and thus, they are constituted in the very process of analytical operation or argumentative ‘doing’. “There is not an actual theory and probably not even one single constructivist methodology.”<sup>654</sup> Constructivism could rather be classified as a “theory of knowledge” or epistemology. However, this is, once again, what Constructivism does not *want to be*.

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652 JACHTENFUCHS Markus: Deepening and Widening Integration Theory. In: Journal of European Public Policy, No. 9/2002, pp. 650-657, here p. 653.

653 VAN LANGENHOVE Luk: Theorising Regionhood. UNU/CRIS e-Working Papers, W-2003/1. Bruges 2003, p. 6.

654 See TASSINARI Fabrizio: Mare Europaeum. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe. Copenhagen 2004, p. 82.

Constructivism focuses on social ontologies including such diverse phenomena as, for example, intersubjective meanings, norms, rules, institutions, routinized practices, discourse, constitutive and/or deliberative processes, symbolic politics, imagined and/or epistemic communities, communicative action, collective identity formation, and cultures of national security. [...] By emphasising that social ontologies constitute a key dimension of Constructivism, we distance ourselves from a view that reduces constructivism to primarily an issue of epistemology.<sup>655</sup>

Another major deceit underlying constructivist thinking is that normative factors like identity or ideology can be completely measurable – or at least – apparent to the eye of the observant. The normative claim is directly linked with the positivist expectation that the “intersubjective meaning” is directly apparent to the external observer.<sup>656</sup> In many cases, constructivist approaches seem to ignore what could be called the ‘trap of relativism’ since – in the strict sense – also the analyst or observer is subject to his or her own mental constructs, and when trying to analyse, and thereby, to (close to psychologically) interpret political or social language and discursive interaction of others, the same effect of habitualization will take place, and that might distort the alleged “intersubjective meaning” as it is postulated by Constructivism itself. Some constructivists actually do not directly oppose this criticism. They rather consciously emphasise that the theoretical foundations of constructivism themselves are subject to “continuous processes of social construction within the community.”<sup>657</sup>

In many cases, the academic analyst is caught in his own discursively constructed world, interpreting discourses to gain knowledge or probably to achieve certain strategic goals within the scientific community. Lovering reflected this critical assumption in respect to the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) – a theoretical model for the explanation of regionalism that largely draws upon social constructivist foundations.<sup>658</sup>

[The NRA must be seen as] an ideologically-loaded discourse which is proving to be extremely useful for existing organizations and a new regionally constituted service class it is fabulously successful. [...] The rise of the New Regionalism offers a striking example of an intimate connection between the construction of knowledge and the policy agendas of powerful institutions. The New Regionalism [...] has gained influence not because of its scientific content but because it has attractive ideological resonances for a range of corporate, political, cultural and academic actors.<sup>659</sup>

As the following example taken from one of the major “bordering” and “rebordering” œuvres shows, these bold “Constructivist games” often lead to rather quaint findings, where the analyst himself seems to be twisted by normative construction, or was simply,

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655 CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 530.

656 *Ibid.*, here p. 534.

657 See RISSE Thomas/WIENER Antje: ‘Something Rotten’ and the Social Construction of Social Constructivism. A Comment on Comments. In: *Journal of European Public Policy*, No. 5/1999, pp. 775-782, here p. 779.

658 See chapter “The Discursive Construction of Regions”, p. 170-.

659 LOVERING John: Theory led by Policy? The Inadequacies of the “New Regionalism” in economic geography illustrated from the Case of Wales. Paper presented at the Economic Geography Research Group Seminar ‘Institutions and Governance’. Department of Geography, London, 3 July 1998, p. 21.

as Moravcsik put it, “waxing desperate with imagination”:<sup>660</sup> The following citation taken from Möller gives an example of this tendency in social constructivist analyses:

In the early 1990s, [...] many policy-makers [...] invoked a common historical heritage by referring to, among other things, the Hansa League. This may have been a useful starting point for region building, but from a long term perspective it has failed [...] because the historical identity markers [...] have been too weak, being too remote from and too irrelevant to people’s every day lives to provide sufficient amalgam to bind the Northern people together. However, rather than drawing the pessimistic conclusion that due to a lack of a collective memory the region building process in Europe’s North is ultimately doomed to failure, it is suggested here that we should treat as an asset what at first sight seems to be a liability. That is to say deconstructing the ostensibly unifying stories and acknowledging the existence of diverse and ambivalent collective memories may result in a Northern subjectivity that is based on an appreciation of, rather than a reduction in, difference.<sup>661</sup>

At a later stage, Möller even adopts a heavily sermonal style postulating that

an increase in pluralistic memory games is required in order for Northern subjectivity to grow. This means, first of all, an increase in the awareness of the deficiencies in the region-building process with respect to the emergence of a mnemonic region, i.e. one that does not unite its inhabitants on the basis of common memories, but rather one that acknowledges that different groups of people have different sets of memories that are equally valuable.<sup>662</sup>

While these honest concerns about the righteousness of the region-building process are more than justified, given the obvious disparity between rhetoric enthusiasm and factual political or “mental” progression, they also appear misplaced to the extent that the whole “process” (as that is what Möller claims to be analysing) is taken far too seriously and is being subjected to moral justifications.

This is all not to say that constructivist informed contributions to the Baltic Sea Regionalism debate have not been important or significant. Constructivism should be seen as an additional perspective, a part of a mosaic of factors, and most importantly, a methodological guideline or strategy, but it is not a theory of its own. My main criticism of the constructivist approach is based on an argument suggested in the field of Social Geography: A region has always a dual character. On the one hand, a region might well be a cognitive construct produced in the course of discourse and thus, determined by inhabitants, observers, politicians, researchers and not least, by region-builders. However, a region is also ‘real’ in terms of “neutral and measurable.”<sup>663</sup> Here the argument of the “light” version of Social Constructivism might come in with the riposte that the social constructivist perspective does not categorically deny the existence of material reality.

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660 See MORAVCSIK Andrew: ‘Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?’ Constructivism and European Integration. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 669-681, here p. 679.

661 MÖLLER Frank: Rafting Nilas. Subjectivity, Memory and the Discursive Patterns of the North. In: BROWNING Christopher S. (ed.): *Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements*. Aldershot 2005, pp. 31-47, here p. 32.

662 *Ibid.*, here p. 43-44.

663 See BLOTEVOGEL Hans Heinrich: Auf dem Weg zu einer Theorie der Regionalität. In: BRUNN Gerhard (ed.): *Region und Regionsbildung in Europa*. Baden-Baden 1996, pp. 44-68, here pp. 45-47.

[Sociological] Constructivism does not deny the existence of a phenomenal world, external to thought. This is the world of brute (mainly natural) facts. It does oppose, and this is something different, that phenomena can constitute themselves as objects of knowledge independently of discursive practices. It does not challenge the possible thought-independent existence of (in particular natural) phenomena, but it challenges their language-independent observation.<sup>664</sup>

This last point is, in turn, what *I do openly oppose*. Taking a “brute fact” out of the phenomenal world in Northern Europe, for example remoteness: as a factor, it can be measured on the basis of specific structural criteria that help to calculate the accessibility of a region, and thus, to come to know about any specific infrastructural or technical needs the respective region might have.<sup>665</sup> This again, might determine the development of respective policies without being subject to social construction in any sense. Political solutions that might be developed in response to the factual challenge are likely to be constructed in discursive terms. However, the significance and politicising effect of the mere discursively independent “phenomenal substance” remains.

The very example of the Hanseatic League could be employed in order to support this critical stance. Well before the League was formally established, the seaports alongside the Baltic Sea and the North Sea had already built up an important trading route that gradually tightened the link between them.<sup>666</sup> I do not want to join in the traditional debate about the similarity of the different sorts of “New Regionalism” and its alleged historical precursor. Taking the League instead as a mere instance of regionalism itself and looking at the course of its development and the way it was established over the years, the social constructivist perspective becomes strongly challenged. At those times, a potential social construction of a spatial concept as wide-ranging as the one underlying the Hanseatic League was fairly limited in terms of communication and transfer of knowledge. Neither there existed technical possibilities for the ample promotion of the alleged region-building project, nor could the academic community be perceived as closely networked across land and state borders. Still, the League happened to establish a strong legacy. What laid the ground for its “existence” in both phenomenological and ideological terms could not be, as claimed by social constructivists, its continuous social construction by region constructors. The Hanseatic spatial concept could not be “spoken or written into existence.” The cooperative structures of the League rather resulted from concrete economic and political interests.

In contemporary political discourse, where there are plenty of means to “communicate a region into existence”, the Hansa image (among many others) has been employed, and to a great extent also deliberately distorted in order to serve specific region-building arguments. However, the constitutive effect of these processes of construction should not be overestimated. While politically, the (partly) strategic employment of discursive tools is highly significant, it should certainly not lead us to the assumption that the region (or spatial concept) could not exist independently from these discursive

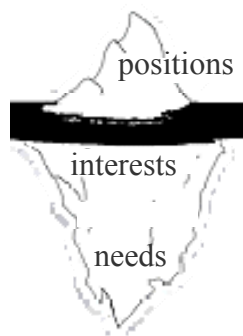
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664 GUZZINI Stefano: A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations. In: European Journal of International Relations, No. 2/2000, pp. 147-182, here p. 159.

665 See for example SPIEKERMANN Klaus/AALBU Hallgeir: Nordic Peripherality in Europe. Nordregion Working Paper, Nr. 2/2004. Stockholm 2004.

666 See POSTEL Rainer: The Hanseatic League and its Decline. Paper presented at the Central Connecticut State University, New Britain. 20 November 1996.

processes. Discursive constructs, whether they involve politico-strategic intents or not, are not to be equated with the structural “substance” that brings the region (or another spatial entity) into existence. The constructs purported in political discourse are *part of* what the region “is substantially about” but they do certainly *not determine its existence*. The essence of these considerations could be depicted by using the renowned Iceberg-Model that Johan Galtung introduced in the context of conflict analysis.<sup>667</sup>



**Figure 7: Social Constructivism and the Analytical ‘Tip of the Iceberg’**

Galtung’s explanation of the constitution of conflict holds that it is comparable to the structural characteristics of an iceberg. The bottom nine tenths are hidden from view, while only the tip of the iceberg juts out above the waterline. While the context where this analogy has been originally employed is completely different, it still appears to offer a good model to illustrate the criticism of the social constructivist perspective. Political discourse as well as every single construct that is being employed, perverted or manipulated in the course of public and political debate only constitutes the ‘tip of the iceberg’, leaving the underlying interests and power-related motives unexplored. This general critique draws again on Moravcsik’s assessment about the “constructivist unwillingness” to place analytical claims “at any real risk of empirical disconfirmation.”<sup>668</sup>

Social constructivist analyses have certainly opened up a wealth of new insights into the study of regionalist phenomena. Indeed, the considerations about the history tool and other aspects occurring in the public discourse on Baltic Sea Regionalism added a strong constructivist element to my study as well.<sup>669</sup> However, the intention behind this was more to support the description of the phenomenon. The reasoning about the employment of various different argumentative tools was rather meant to serve the purpose of *introducing* the matter of regionalism than *explaining* it.

667 GALTUNG Johan: Gewalt, Frieden und Friedensforschung. In: SENGHAAS Dieter (ed.): Kritische Friedensforschung. Frankfurt 1972, pp. 55-104. Figure taken from Institut für Angewandte Kreativität (IAK), website [www.iak.de](http://www.iak.de) [23 February 2008].

668 MORAVCSIK Andrew: ‘Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?’ Constructivism and European Integration. In: Journal of European Public Policy 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 669-681, here p. 670.

669 See chapter “Visions and Constructed Realities – the History Tool”, p. 51-, and chapter “The Argument of Challenges – United in Diversity”, p. 51-.



This technical approach seeks to reflect the analytical weaknesses of constructivist explanation as laid out in this chapter. While the descriptive output of constructivist applications is rather dense, there is a clear lack in explanatory power. Constructivist perspectives often refrain from a *systematic* interpretation of the social interactions observed. Even though the main constructivist working method, content analysis, offers a good instrument for the identification of strategic motives and interests underlying social and political action, the explanatory output of most empirical studies stemming from the constructivist camp largely remains low.

Moreover, despite their focus on the political process (most importantly, the discursive process preparing and framing political decision-making and acting) social constructivists are often reluctant to refer to the issue of finality. The potential outcome of a sequence of discursive action gets less analytical attention than the process itself. The rigid concentration of analysis on various aspects of discursive exchanges often appears to distort the ratio between the political arena where actions are being promoted and “constructed discursively” and the acts of factual cooperation, the establishment of material structures that transcend the realm of affirmative declarations and political arguing. What appears to be one of the most persistent misbeliefs of Social Constructivism is that elitist discourse is expected to have – at least – a long-term impact on the broader political public and thus, an unconditional bearing on the formation of ideology and identity. This perspective does not only neglect the formative effect of individual perceptions about (material) political developments, it also denies (or at least underestimates) the direct impact of political decisions and policies on norms and beliefs.

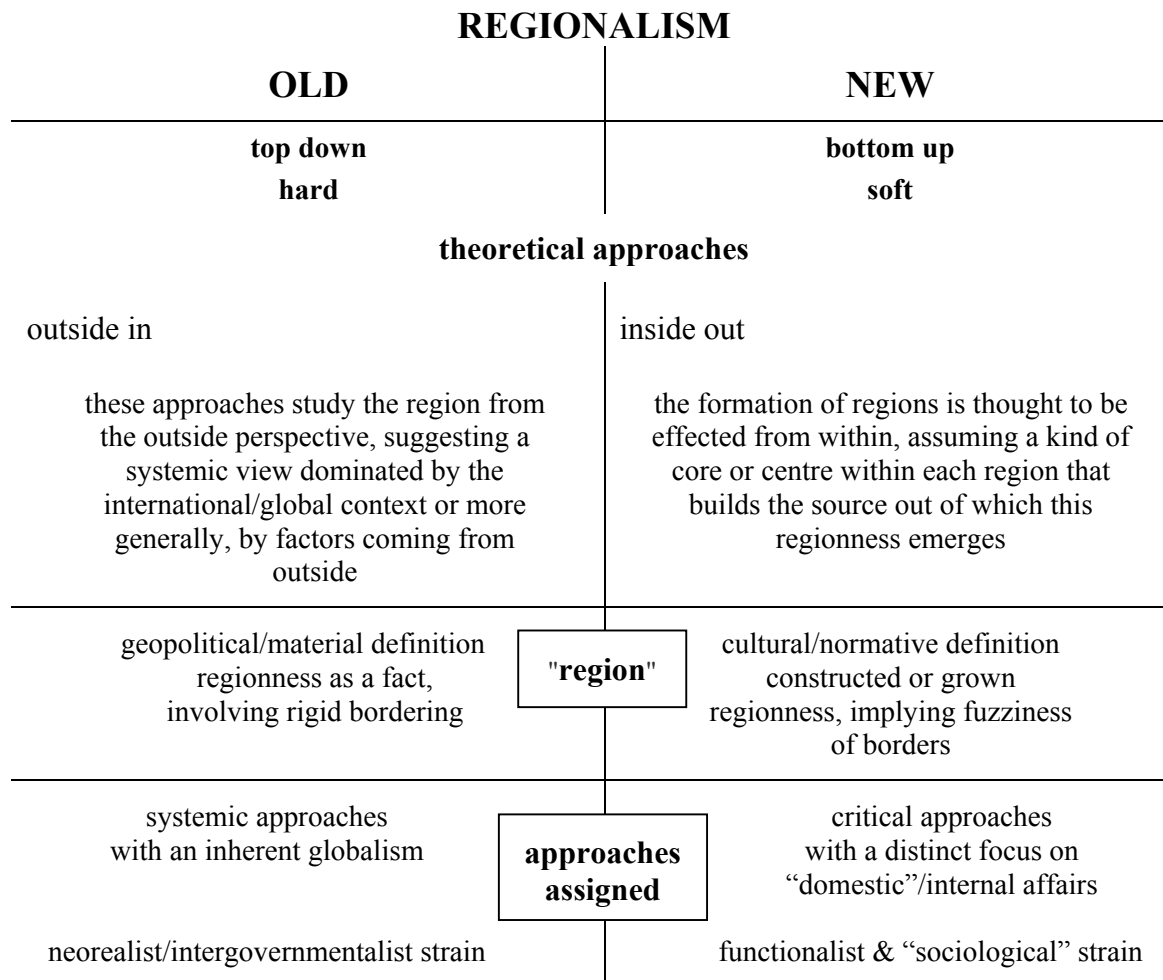
## *II. Intermediate Synthesis: Crosslinking Typologies and Theories*

This chapter seeks to draw reference lines from the constructivist Region-Building Approach (RBA) by Neumann over the typologies developed by e.g. Hettne (the Old/New dichotomy) to the array of theories of European integration discussed in the first part of this section by depicting the linkages (or “crosslinks”) between them in form of a synoptical overview. It is arranged according to the guiding principles that appear to be underlying each counterpart within a certain dichotomy. Equally, various specific characteristics of a type (e.g. Hard Regionalism) are seen to be reflected within a certain theoretical strain in EIT (e.g. Liberal Intergovernmentalism). The scheme starts out from the Old/New pair, since its conceptual implications are perceived to be most significant for this kind of synopsis, classifying them as follows:

- “old” in terms of tendentially narrow or “special with regard to objectives” and
- “new” in the sense of a “more comprehensive multidimensional process”<sup>670</sup>

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670 HETTNE Björn: The New Regionalism: Implications for Development and Peace. In: HETTNE Björn/NOTAI András: The New Regionalism. Implications for Global Development and International Security. Helsinki 1994, pp. 1-49, here p. 1-2.



**Table 22: Explaining Regionalism: Crosslinking Typologies and Theories**

Since the mere identification of dichotomies as well as the respective characterisation of typologies (Old/New and Hard/Soft Regionalism) offers little substance from a more abstract and theoretical perspective, such an overview might help to couple these largely descriptive categories with the bulk of theoretical approaches. Additionally, it also allows the reader to place the general discussion about theories in the wider context of regionalism studies as introduced in the first section of this study.<sup>671</sup> Tassinari suggests a “continuum” for this kind of structuring overview in order to allow for the analytical consideration of positions ‘in between’.<sup>672</sup> Accordingly, this scheme should not be perceived to be generally applicable or to comply with any sort of question linked to the positioning of a certain theory alongside the established categories. Following a rigid interpretation, the two “crosslinking columns” could be seen as either end of a spectrum of approaches.

<sup>671</sup> See in particular chapter “Regionalism – Definitions, Delimitations and Typologies”, p. 34-.

<sup>672</sup> See TASSINARI Fabrizio: *Mare Europaeum. Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation from post-Wall to post-Enlargement Europe*. Copenhagen 2004, p. 16.

### III. Application Pattern II: The Correlation Between Meso and Macro-Level

The question of applicability of EIT can also be posed in another context. Are the European Integration Theories at hand suitable to explain the *correlation* between macro-level integration and the integrative dynamics at the meso-level (i.e. in the BSR)? It appears obvious that the analysis aiming to answer this question has to focus on the potential “regional dimension” featured by various theoretical models. Hence, virtually “applicable” approaches should (at least) provide an understanding of

- how the EU relates to its own (territorial) parts,
- and vice versa, how these “parts” relate to the overall EU framework.

Trying to remain within the practical scope of this study, I am neither willing nor able to detect these aspects in *every single* approach to integration that the last decades of European studies have put forth. Hence, I would like to approach this analytical complex by applying a (negative) logic of exclusion, by asking: What limits are set to the applicability of European Integration Theory when it comes to the explanation of complex political processes *between* the EU and a European regional entity such as the BSR? The search for the answer to this question should first lead us to the consideration of the following tendencies in (European) Integration Theory:

- Given the fact that most European Integration Theories are designed to explain EU *internal* processes, there is a clear lack in emphasis on the specific circumstances of foreign policy.<sup>673</sup> Since the complex interrelation between the EU and the BSR as a European meso-region can be regarded as part of a “grey zone” between the EU’s internal and external policy dimension, it is likely to constitute a marginal or borderline case for most theoretical models available in the field.
- The traditional (and many of the current) approaches to European integration have been (explicitly or inexplicitly) designed for the European *macro*-level, i.e. the *European* integration process. These models largely tend to be either state-oriented or empirically focussed on the structural process of institutionalisation and the build-up of a (potentially) supranational polity *sui generis*.
- The major strands in EIT seem to base on a “unitarist thesis”, following a certain “drive for centrality” which implies that their analytical sharpness is low by nature when it comes to the explanation of “peripheral” or decentralising phenomena.<sup>674</sup>
- Most theoretical approaches to European integration draw a sharp line between macro-level and sub-level action. Instead of identifying and analysing the linkages between the two (or more) levels, the respective political processes are largely treated as two different and distinct political phenomena.

When it comes to the discussion of approaches that consider the complex correlation between different *levels* of political action, one specific connotation may certainly crop up: the one of multi-level governance models in EIT. In fact, as laid out in the context of the first application pattern, governance models do not only describe the dispersion of competence *across* territorial levels but they also focus on the *interconnection* of

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673 See CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/TONRA Ben: The Study of EU Foreign Policy. Between international relations and European studies. In: Idd. (eds): Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy. Manchester/New York 2004, pp. 1-9, here p. 4.

674 See PARKER Noel: Integrated Europe and its ‘Margins’. Action and Reaction. In: Id./ ARMSTRONG Bill (eds): Margins in European Integration. Houndmills 2000, pp. 3-27, here p. 18.

multilevel political arenas in the process of governing. In contrast to state centric approaches, multi-level governance does not contend that state sovereignty is preserved or even strengthened through further integration; nor do multi-level governance approaches suggest that nation state influence absolutely controls institutional development beyond the state level. Decision-making between various levels of action is seen as loosely interconnected instead of assuming the persistence of tightly nested and hierarchical chains of bilateral links. Institutions are perceived to have an independent influence in policy making that cannot be derived from their role as agents of national executives.<sup>675</sup>

By emphasising the poly-centricity of complex systems of integration, governance approaches certainly cover many important aspects that are significant in the context of the second application pattern. The correlation between the regional arena (the BSR) and the wider EU framework appears to comply with the notion of loose multilateral links as suggested by multi-level governance approaches. However, besides the fact that these approaches are not equipped to analyse the motivation *behind* such cross-level interactions, meaning interests and obviously existing efficiency calculations, they do not provide sufficient analytical potential to grasp the politico-strategic dynamics underlying this multi-layered system. As noted by Marsh and Furlong, “in practice, multilevel governance can also mean obscure elite-led agreements and public incomprehension.”<sup>676</sup> Multi-level governance approaches are not perfectly precise in this respect.

Another point of reference for the analysis of the macro-meso relationship, meaning macro-level processes and the respective bottom-up and top-down effects, results from the consideration, that from a nation state perspective (Sub)regionalism and European integration can be seen as two substantially different or even diametrically *opposed* processes of structural change virtually moving a political system ‘beyond the nation state’.<sup>677</sup> Power and governance is dislocated “upwards” to the supranational level, and “downwards” to regional and local entities. The latter movement could also be said to head “outwards” since non-state bodies gain centre stage.<sup>678</sup>

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, twin forces continue to stretch the nation-state in opposite directions. States as they enter the new millennium are transformed not only by the centripetal pull of supranational integration, but also by the centrifugal forces of resurgent Regionalism. [...] Uncertainty generated by these countervailing forces prompts powerful and contentious arguments about the normative and empirical roles of subnational actors in increasingly complex webs of multi-level governance.<sup>679</sup>

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675 See HOOGHE Liesbet/MARKS Gary: Multi-Level Governance and European Integration. Lanham 2001, p. 3.

676 MARSH David/FURLONG Paul: A Skin not a Sweater. Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science. In: MARSH David/STOKER Gerry (eds): Theory and Methods in Political Science. London 2001, pp. 17-41, here p. 38.

677 ‘Beyond the nation state’ as a phrase dates back to Ernst B. Haas, one of the main exponents of Neo-Functionalism. HAAS Ernst B.: Beyond the Nation-State. Functionalism and International Organization. Stanford 1964.

678 See AMIN Ash: Spatialities of Globalisation. In: Environment and Planning, No. 34/2002, pp. 385-399, here p. 386.

679 DOWNS William M.: Regionalism in the European Union. Key Concepts and Project Overview. In: Journal of European Integration, No. 3/2002, pp. 171-177, here p. 171.

Even though depending on the perspective these two dynamics do not always occur in terms of “countervailing forces” it should be taken into account that the alleged permanent cleavage between supranational “integratedness” and regionalist affixedness is likely to affect a nation state’s foreign policy orientation.<sup>680</sup> (Sub-) Regionalism may also influence a state’s membership conduct and thereby have a positive or negative effect on the process of macro-level integration. These potentially conflicting dynamics between a macro-level entity and meso-level formations that intersect with the catchment area of the former are widely neglected in most theoretical models on regional (and European) integration. Together with the four counter-factors mentioned above, this consideration should make us reconsider the analytical self-limitation to the field of EIT. One of the strongest arguments in this regard is what Rumford called the EIT’s inherent “European solipsism”, meaning the tendency in European integration studies of viewing the EU as “the sole author of European developments.”

In order to understand the dynamics of contemporary European transformation, EU studies must encourage a greater diversity of (theoretical) perspectives. [...] Developments in Europe are best studied within a global framework.<sup>681</sup>

Decades of academic thinking about European integration have taught us to restrict our perspective onto the European case and to reject any sort of external analysis that tries to generalise the specific European case or abstract it on a more global basis. IR Theory has been blamed for its tendency to “normalise” the EU by applying a certain (state-centric) logic to a system that is allegedly *sui generis*.<sup>682</sup>

The dominant paradigm in IR scholarship regards European integration as the practice of ordinary diplomacy under conditions creating unusual opportunities for providing collective goods through highly institutionalised exchange. From this ‘intergovernmentalist’ perspective, the EC is essentially a forum for interstate bargaining. Member-states remain the only important actors at the European level.<sup>683</sup>

In fact, most traditional IR approaches concentrate on constellations of power and interest among states and neglect other significant factors such as the formative impact of institutions on state level political conduct or the importance of values and norms for the formation of interests and strategic objectives; most scholars in the field probably

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680 Another very different perspective on the parallel process of Supranationalisation and Regionalism builds the basis of notions like the ‘Europe of the Regions’. According to the regional federalist perspective, the two dynamics do not appear as countervailing forces. They both contribute to the aim of compensating “what the modern nation state cannot do in a world of complex interdependence.” The vision behind this concept is a decentralised European federation in which the role and power of nation states is progressively reduced to a scale where state centrality is irrelevant to political reality. See GÄRTNER Heinz: *Modelle Europäischer Sicherheit. Wie entscheidet Österreich?* Vienna 1997, p. 56. See also chapter “What kind of ‘Europe of the Regions’?”, p. 206-.

681 RUMFORD Chris: Rethinking European Spaces. Territory, Borders, Governance. In: *Comparative European Politics*, Issue 2/3 (July/September 2006), pp. 127–140, here p. 129.

682 This criticism has been fairly present in the general dispute between neo-realists/ intergovernmentalists and constructivists. For more details on this dispute, see CHRISTIANSEN Thomas/JØRGENSEN Knud Erik/WIENER Antje: The Social Construction of Europe. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 528-544, here p. 533. And MORAVCSIK Andrew: ‘Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?’ Constructivism and European Integration. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 669-681.

683 PIERSON Paul: The Path to European Integration. A Historical Institutionalist Approach. In: *Comparative Political Studies*, No. 2/1996, pp. 123-163, here p. 124.

also feel themselves merely focussing on the interaction of states through diplomacy or violence within an overall context of structural anarchy.<sup>684</sup> However, EIT could equally be blamed for trying to develop a “general theory of regional integration from very particular European experiences.”<sup>685</sup>

Hurrell probably has a point claiming that some political or social phenomena might appear to be politically complex but theoretically, turn out to be “rather easily explicable” by applying a “traditional toolkit.”<sup>686</sup> He also goes on with a rather provocative but probably useful recommendation.

Rather than try and understand other regions through the distorting mirror of Europe, it is better to think in general theoretical terms and in ways that draw both on traditional International Relations and on other areas of social thought. Hence we should consider foundational sets of ideas before they have become encrusted by their application to a particular region or case.<sup>687</sup>

While in this context, Hurrell is referring to the applicability of EIT to other regions, meaning regions *outside* Europe, these considerations appear to be also highly relevant for the theoretical complex addressed in this study. These considerations build the point of departure for the following trial application of IRT to the Baltic Sea case. They have also led to the consideration of yet another theoretical camp in political science for the purpose of this study. By way of concluding this theoretical section, an “outsider” approach taken from the field of traditional comparative analysis, the system theoretical model developed by Talcott Parsons will be dealt with, intending to point out the added value alternative theoretical choices can bring when trying to analyse an issue as complex as the “Baltic Sea Conundrum.”

#### *D. Inputs from International Relations Theory*

Most approaches in IRT developed before or during the Cold War have mainly focussed on large-scale and global developments and processes. Only after the superpower overlay had been lifted, also IRT slowly started to open itself towards political phenomena at a “lower” level of action. However, since state-centric perspectives still dominate scholarship in this field, a theoretical IR model explicitly treating the subject of meso-regional cooperation or regionalism is difficult to come by.

However, selected traditional IR approaches do address the aspect of cooperation occurring within a certain geopolitical unit, and therefore, appear to be arguably applicable for the purposes of this study. The arrangement of this chapter takes over the structure suggested for the discussion of various different approaches in EIT.<sup>688</sup> The aforementioned “application pattern I” refers to the BSR in terms of a macro-cosmic entity, treating it as a phenomenon of its own with less attention to the ways it relates to the ‘outside world’, mainly meaning the broader context of European integration. The

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684 See ROSAMOND Ben: *Theories of European Integration*. Basingstoke 2000, p. 164.

685 See *ibid.*, p. 159.

686 HURRELL Andrew: *The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory*. In: FARRELL Mary/HETTNE Björn/VAN LANGENHOVE Luk (eds): *Global Politics and Regionalism*. London 2005, pp. 38-53, here p. 39.

687 *Ibid.*, here p. 39.

688 See also table 19 presented in chapter “Applying Integration Theory to the Baltic Sea Case: Application Patterns”, p. 162-.

“application pattern II” then turns again to the issue of macro-meso relationships, of the virtual linkages between the BSR as a European region and the EU context as a broader context framing action in the BSR and transregional interaction across its outside borders.

<b>application pattern I</b>	<p>Baltic Sea Regionalism is addressed as a self-standing phenomenon,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– trying to identify the inherent dynamics that led to the establishment of the BSR as a common notion in regional/international discourse,</li> <li>– addressing the question about the quality of Baltic Sea Regionness in comparison to other more established geopolitical notions current in the Northern European context (e.g. the “Nordic system”).</li> </ul>
<b>application pattern II</b>	<p>The BSR is distinctly treated as a European region that holds a close albeit not exclusive connection to the EU. The analysis focuses on the theoretical incorporation of the macro-meso connections, trying to develop different models to depict the relationship between the BSR and its supranational counterpart, the EU institutional and political complex.</p>

**Table 23: Application Patterns for the Critical Discussion of IRT in the BSR Case**

#### *I. Application pattern I: The Security Community Approach*

Throughout the past decades, the Nordic North has established itself as a non-war community. Despite occasional frictions, the Nordic five have largely abstained from employing physical or material force as a means to solve or settle political differences.

The Nordics have on numerous occasions found their way out of situations that would have typically led to war [or would normally have] a strong tendency to cause military action.<sup>689</sup>

This specific Nordic phenomenon has inspired a number of political scientists just as much as IR theorists, who tried to develop various different models of explanation. The Security Community Approach (SCA) as developed by Karl Deutsch and some of his fellows in the late 1950s has certainly been among the most prominent abstract models applied to the Nordic case. Deutsch extensively dealt with the specific Nordic circumstances and claimed to offer a theoretical explanation to grasp the phenomenon of lasting and sustainable Nordic peace. The broad reception and success of his approach turned the Nordic case into a “standard example for an uncontested security community” that developed “features of a dogma”.<sup>690</sup> The following sub-chapters give an overview of the theoretical model introduced by Deutsch in the framework of his logic of transactionalism in order to prepare for the critical discussion recently brought up by theorists like Adler and Barnett.

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689 JOENNIEMI Pertti: Norden Beyond Security Community. In: ARCHER Clive/JOENNIEMI Pertti (eds): *The Nordic Peace*. Aldershot 2003, pp. 198-212, here p. 198.

690 See *ibid.*, here p. 199.

## 1. *Deutschian Transactionalism*

The concept of security communities originally dates from Richard Van Wageningen.<sup>691</sup> However, it was only in the surroundings of Karl Deutsch that the approach eventually got international attention. Deutsch was what most in academia would perceive as the founding father of the SCA.<sup>692</sup> Karl Deutsch pioneered transaction flow analysis as a distinct form of regional integration theory. The transactionalist perspective focuses on the magnitude and symmetry in the flows of social and economic transactions as well as of social communications. These flows are also perceived as the major indicators for the waxing and waning of regional security communities.<sup>693</sup> Intensified transactions between national communities are thought to foster a sense of trust at the supranational level and hence, to produce a feeling of security. Deutsch defined the idea of a “security community” as a group of people/actors that becomes integrated to a degree and extent that the members of this community abstain from physical conflict and find other ways to settle their disputes. Deutsch differentiates between two different types of security communities:<sup>694</sup>

- “amalgamated” or “unified” communities” (showcase: USA);
- “pluralistic” communities, where members retain their legal independence and sovereignty. Today’s EU could be classified as this sort of a pluralistic security community, since it consists of a group of virtually integrated states, dominated by stability and a permanent absence of any risk of physical war between its members.

Despite these formal differences, security communities are defined by a common element, which is the “dependable expectation of peaceful change.”<sup>695</sup>

## 2. *Security Community Building in Northern Europe*

The traditional formation of Nordic Cooperation has often been referred to as the ideal example of a Deutschian security community since it meets all preconditions for a peaceful resolution of controversies. The outstanding quality of Nordic Cooperation is said to be lying in its traditional cultural and ideological focus. Intra-Nordic discourse during the Cold War has been very much about identity building, togetherness and “we”-feeling while state-centric behaviour was close to inexistent.

The Deutschian SCA has been among the most contested approaches in IRT during the Cold War era. By placing *Norden* within the domestic field of the states involved Deutsch declined to adhere to the general rule in traditional IRT that there is an important qualitative difference between the inside and the outside of state action. According to his explanation, the Nordic model succeeded in transcending the logic of international anarchy by developing a high degree of cooperative cohesiveness *from*

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691 VAN WAGENEN Richard: *Research in the International Organization Field*. Princeton 1952.

692 Adler and Barnett give a good overview of the respective scholar debate. See ADLER Emanuel/BARNETT Michael (eds): *Security Communities*. Cambridge 1998.

693 See DEUTSCH Karl W.: *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience. Princeton 1957, p. 16.

694 See DEUTSCH Karl/BURRELL Sidney A./KANN Robert A./LEE Maurice Jr./LICHTERMAN Martin/LINDGREN Raymond E./LOEWENHEIM Francis L. VAN WAGENEN Richard: *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. Princeton 1957, pp. 3-6.

695 See KATZENSTEIN Peter J.: *Regionalism in Comparative Perspective*. ARENA Working Papers, No. 1/1996. Oslo 1996, p. 8.



within.<sup>696</sup> This approach allows for the avoidance of various different dilemmas common in IRT. Security is not perceived to be solely determined by the international system; single actors can join in a community of security and peace in order to reduce the likelihood of tension between a certain number of selected partners.

Using a constructivist approach with behaviouralist methodological connotations, Deutsch made a clear choice in arguing that the Nordic region had become a pluralist security community, a community not in terms of common security with some specific, sovereignty-based, statist and centralising arrangements to provide for it, but something unstructured, societal and an island of peace amidst a broader setting based on the presence of the danger of war. The recipe for doing away with the danger of war, in his view, consisted of far-reaching consultation, communication and co-operation. By their affinity and the establishing of a useful co-operative relationship, the Nordic countries had overcome the usual hardships of relations between states and eliminated the expectations of war in their interrelations.<sup>697</sup>

During the Cold War, the security community concept was strongly opposed by the then dominating realist paradigm in IR analysis. Mostly the Deutschian security community application to the North Atlantic area was seen as highly hypothetical and “not in tune with the overall situation of power politics and spheres of influence during the Cold War.”<sup>698</sup> Only after the dissolution of the bipolar world order, the concept became fashionable again. The social factors of a peaceful political order (identity, a common cultural understanding and shared values) which used to build an important element in Deutsch’s theoretical construct seemed to re-enter the academic debate and were taken up again as a starting point for further theorising.

### 3. *Adler and Barnett – Transactionalism Reconstructed*

It was Emanuel Adler together with Michael Barnett, who tried to produce a refined version of the traditional Deutschian security community concept. In their early papers, Adler and Barnett replaced Deutsch’s behavioural approach to regional integration with a constructivist stance, by embedding the basic model into what could be called the mainstream assumptions of Social Constructivism, i.e. that security communities are discursively constructed entities established between states that agree on the “unbearable destructiveness of modern war”, and thus, choose to strengthen their system of collective security.

While Adler and Barnett are conventional in their view of the relation between theory and evidence, they resist the economist’s tendency of sidestepping the effect of actor identities on actor interests and strategies. Hence, their research agenda links up with perspectives stressing social psychological factors and social roles in international relations.<sup>699</sup>

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696 See JOENNIEMI Pertti: Norden as a Post-Nationalist Construction. In: Id. (ed.): *Neo-Nationalism or Regionality: The Restructuring of Political Space around the Baltic Rim*. Stockholm 1997, pp. 181-234, here p. 193.

697 Ibid., here p. 194.

698 STADSHOLT André: *Security Communities and Communities of Security. Security Community Building in a Neo-Grotian Perspective*. Flemingsberg 2001, p. 3. Online publication [www2.huberlin.de/BaltSeaNet/forum/beitraege/ast.pdf](http://www2.huberlin.de/BaltSeaNet/forum/beitraege/ast.pdf) [23 January 2007].

699 KATZENSTEIN Peter J.: *Regionalism in Comparative Perspective*. ARENA Working Papers, No. 1/1996. Oslo 1996, p. 8.

According to Adler's interpretation, it is collective identity that lays the ground for a security community. Shared self-definitions lead to an internalisation of norms and values. Social learning creates stability and peace, above all if it is combined with general processes of functional integration.<sup>700</sup>

Security communities are socially constructed because shared meanings, constituted by interaction, engender collective identities. They are dependent on communication, discourse, and interpretation, as well as on material environments.<sup>701</sup>

Adler's and Barnett's main criticism of the Deutschian transactionalist SCA was its alleged inattentiveness to the "complex and causal ways in which the state power and practices, international organisations, transactions, and social learning processes can generate new forms of mutual identification and security relations."<sup>702</sup> Another weakness in the conventional SCA identified by the two critics is the indistinct relationship between the various analytical factors: transaction, identity, security and we-ness. In fact, Deutsch does not clearly indicate how security and identity actually relate to each other in terms of a cause-effect chain. He does not specify whether it is identity and mutual responsiveness that allows for the settlement of peace and security, which again, creates the ideal circumstances for further integration; or whether security is achieved through integration that increases the we-feeling and furthers the establishment of a common identity. Adler and Barnett sought to introduce a more linear sequence to the model, establishing that states are, in the first place, determined by external factors that make them aspire to joint solutions. They are then thought to move on with a process of social learning that is accompanied by the establishment of common institutions. This institutionalisation and formal settlement is thought to build the basis for trust and mutual responsiveness.<sup>703</sup> According to this flow of transactions, the alleged "we-feeling" is rather part of the integration outcomes than part of the origins that build the foundation of a security community.

#### *4. Regional Security Complex Theory: Reactions from Copenhagen*

The application of a linear sequence of transactions to the Nordic case as suggested by Adler and Barnett has been strongly opposed by some analysts, most importantly those stemming from the core of the so-called Copenhagen School. Ole Wæver argued that the circumstances determining the Nordic case would largely not comply with the linear assumptions of the newly interpreted SCA by Adler and Barnett.

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700 See *ibid.*, here p. 259.

701 ADLER Emanuel: *Imagined (Security) Communities. Cognitive Regions in International Relations*. Millennium: Journal of International Relations, No. 2/1997, pp. 249-278, here p. 258.

702 ADLER Emanuel/BARNETT Michael: *Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective*. In: Idd (eds): *Security Communities*. Cambridge 1998, pp. 3-28, here p. 9.

703 See ADLER Emanuel/BARNETT Michael: *A Framework for the Study of Security Communities*. In: Idd. (eds): *Security Communities*. Cambridge 1998, pp. 29-68, here p. 38.

The Nordic non-war community emerged in contrast to the expectations of most contemporary theorists of security communities, in having not been achieved by erecting common security structures or institutions, but primarily by processes of ‘desecuritisation’, that is progressive marginalisation of mutual security concerns in favour of other issues.<sup>704</sup>

Building on a more radical constructivist stance, the critical Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) established by Buzan and Wæver claims for a more differentiated explanation of about how security or “non-war communities” come into being and what foundations they are built upon.

A security complex is defined as a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another.<sup>705</sup>

Buzan et al. acknowledge the centrality of state actors on the international scene, but at the same time, seek to move their analysis beyond the state level. They turn their attention also to non-official collective and individual actors, focussing in particular on the “speech acts”, meaning discursive interactions that contribute to “writing or speaking a region into existence”.<sup>706</sup>

Another aspect about the RSCT that appears to be highly relevant in the context of this study is the amity/enmity pattern introduced by the classical RSCT in the early 1990s and taken up by the critical version some years later. The amity/enmity pattern results from the idea that security communities or more generally, security complexes may assume various different forms and that the normative or material foundations they are built upon might change over time. The amity/enmity pattern is intended to conceptualise this potential diversity of security complex phenomena, assuming that interdependence within a non-war community can range on a spectrum between amity and enmity:

- amity involves positive interactions between the various actors within the security complex, this leads to the establishment of strong cooperative structures:
- enmity: the interactions within a security complex are thought to be dominated by confrontation and conflict, or at least, by suspicion and fear.<sup>707</sup>

Buzan also sought to consider the factor of gradual change, distinguishing between

- changes that rise from within a security community (‘internal transformations’), and
- changes that are effected by exogenous factors (‘external modification’).<sup>708</sup>

He also found a category that he would label the ‘overlay’ option, implying that the security interdependence holding together a non-war community is considerably impacted by specific upcoming circumstances at the meta-level. The power emanating

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704 WÆVER Ole: Insecurity, security, and asecuritization in the West European non-war community. In: ADLER Emanuel/BARNETT Michael (eds): *Security Communities*. Cambridge 1998, pp. 69-118, here p. 204.

705 BUZAN Barry/WÆVER Ole/DE WILDE Jaap: *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder 1998, p. 201.

706 See *ibid.*, p. 9.

707 See BUZAN Barry: *People, States and Fear. An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. New York 1991, p. 189.

708 BUZAN Barry/WÆVER Ole/DE WILDE Jaap: *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder 1998, p. 13.

from this meta-source of power is seen to be modifying the nature of internal interdependence, either in a way that the external threat tightens the security links within the community, or in a way that growing suspicion within the community hampers the quality of mutual support.<sup>709</sup>

##### 5. *Inclusive Balticness: Extending the Nordic Non-War Community?*

These reflections about a differentiated and dynamic development of non-war communities build a good starting point for the discussion about whether the traditional Nordic peace system has been successfully extended to the wider Baltic Sea area, or firstly, whether this was intended to happen at all and from whose point of view. The underlying question whether the Nordic system as a mental construct happened to be substantially (and ultimately) challenged by the rise of “New Regionalism” and whether the Baltic States, while striving for (Northern) Europeanness, managed to open up the compact normative system of old *Norden* has been discussed at another point of this study.<sup>710</sup> The conceptual considerations offered by Buzan et al. in the framework of the traditional and critical RSCT may help to grasp the conclusions drawn in that context on a more abstract level. When trying to recall the criteria that generally account for the emergence and persistence of a non-war community one could list the following: two or more states are thought to be

- willing to cooperate;
- constituting a geographically coherent grouping;
- facing security problems that cannot be resolved apart from one another;
- having a relationship marked by security interdependence,
- either on the basis of amity or on the basis of enmity
- to the extent that the ties *among them* are stronger than between them (or one of them) and an ‘*outside*’ actor or systemic reference.

The notion of inclusive Balticness, of a BSR in which both the ‘Old North’ and the new ‘Baltic Northerners’ merge in the framework of a compact regional entity, is verified in most of these aspects – at least at first sight.<sup>711</sup> Factors like the “willingness to cooperate” and the question of “having a relationship marked by security interdependence” may well be perceived as given in the wider Baltic Sea area. But does that prove that the Nordic non-war community has indeed been successfully expanded to the Baltic States, Poland or even parts of Russia? A distinct “BUT” needs to be added when it comes to the substance of these qualities. Both characteristics are shared among the group of BSR states. All of them are

- (most likely) willing to cooperate.....BUT *not exclusively* among them
- (presumably) interdependent regarding security.... .BUT *not exclusively*.

This problem is grasped by criterion (6) that asks for *exclusive* interdependence within the group. This conceptual condition is strongly challenged by the security implications of the general European (and Northern Atlantic) integration process that involves both the classical Nordic and the newly independent Baltic sphere.

709 See *ibid.*, p. 14.

710 See chapter “The ‘Nordic Bloc’ – Driving Core for Baltic Sea Regionalism?”, p. 73-, and chapter “Old North vs. New Regionalism. Visions Competing for the Same Space?”, p. 76-.

711 See figure 5 “Mental subspaces in the European North”.

An alleged Baltic Sea non-war community would lack an important feature, which is, moral insularity building on mutual “expectations for peaceful change.”<sup>712</sup> The EU accession of the Baltic States institutionally marked the fact that a Nordic non-war community was merely perceived as an option or tool to prepare full integration in the wider European (and Northern Atlantic) community. Never explicitly rejecting this option, on the long run, they strived for “more central” channels to secure their interests and progressively enhance their geopolitical position. Looking back, there has never been a Baltic liability to prefer going for a Northern European alternative and to join the club of reluctant, eurosceptical and exceptionalist member states as just where Sweden could be counted in. Equally, the Nordic system never really opened itself for this kind of extension. The Nordic States, and most of all Sweden and Finland, tried to take over a guiding role in the process of Baltic post-Soviet reorientation. However, these efforts were not aiming at a broader reorientation of Nordicism towards a more comprehensive concept of “Northern Europe”. Nordicism has remained exclusive, a fact that could not least be told from the rhetoric style employed in the inner-Nordic debate about the Baltic inclusion.<sup>713</sup>

## *II. Application Pattern II: Sketching a Model of Explanation*

Application pattern II addresses the question of how the meso-level (i.e. the BSR) relates to its macro-level framework, the wider complex of European integration or more specifically, the European Union. The main point of reference here is the consideration presented at the beginning of this section that both Baltic Sea Regionalism (a meso-phenomenon) and the European project (a macro-phenomenon) can be seen as instances of “regional integration” or “regionalism”.<sup>714</sup> There are many ways of how the two levels can be related to each other.<sup>715</sup>

The following figure tries to outline the spectrum of possibilities in this respect.

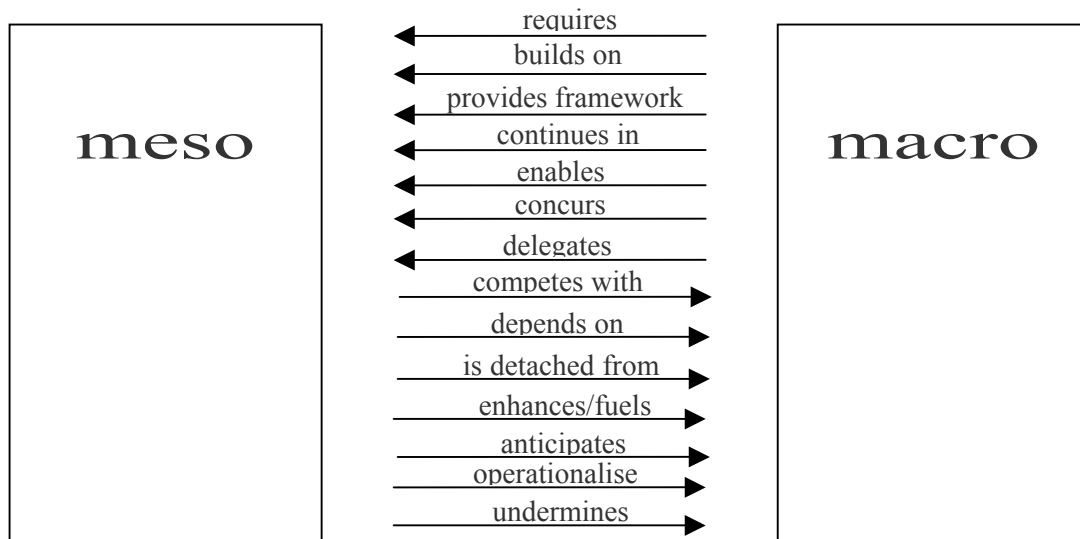
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712 See KATZENSTEIN Peter J.: Regionalism in Comparative Perspective. ARENA Working Papers, No. 1/1996. Oslo 1996, p. 8.

713 For a detailed discussion, see chapter “Old North vs. New Regionalism. Visions Competing for the Same Space?”, p. 76-.

714 See ROSAMOND Ben: Theories of European Integration. Basingstoke 2000, pp. 14-15. And chapter “Introductory Remarks on Regionalism and Integration”, p. 152-.

715 For a discussion of system levels and considerations about the micro-meso-macro distinction of regionalism, see chapter “Levels of Regionalism: Macro-, Meso- and Micro-Regionalism”, p. 37-.



**Figure 8: Interaction and Influence Flows Between Meso- and Macro-Level**

As shown in the figure, macro-regionalism could, for example, be perceived to be *building on* regionalist formations at lower levels. From another point of view, it could be seen to *provide the framework* or means that *enable* (sub)regional activity. The various possibilities listed above show clearly that most relationships are based on a two-way dynamic. Equally, the different variations are not all mutually exclusive but partly interlocking or conditioning each other. Given the variety of possible relations, this list remains exemplary and non-exhaustive. Application pattern II could be addressed by making use of a traditional tool current in the field of IR. Many IR studies approach research questions from a systemic perspective, asking questions like: how is phenomenon X embedded in the wider system of global politics? How does it relate to the ‘outside world’? To what extent is a regional entity subject to systemic impacts and of what sort and intensity are these impacts? How does the regional entity persist despite broad systemic impacts and with what instruments and action strategies does it seek to encounter what infiltrates from ‘outside’? While searching for an answer to this sort of questions, IR studies very often avail themselves of abstract models that help to visualize how a bilateral relationship is e.g. marked by superiority and dependence, or to demonstrate how an alleged centre relates to its periphery.

Hence, what could be derived from the scheme above are various different models of meso-macro inter-relation or inter-action, where single elements from the list together form a distinct type of relationship pattern. Picking out for example the idea of the macro-level entity (in this case, the EU) providing the (necessary) framework for regionalist activities at the meso-level (Baltic Sea Regionalism), the following elements could be combined to build a coherent and comprehensive model of explanation:

- the macro-level *provides* the necessary normative (or other) *framework* for the emergence or functioning of regionalist action at the (sub)regional level;
- the macro-level *enables* Meso-Regionalism by offering appropriate systemic conditions;
- the meso-level is *dependent on* the framing quality of the macro-level;

- the meso-level forms part of the macro-level by *operationalising* integration as *delegated* ‘from above’ *downwards* to the sub-regional and sub-sub-regional/local level.

Following this procedure, different distinct models can be developed that help to approach the macro-meso issue on the basis of a systemic perspective. When adding a time factor, the different models can also be thought of as scenarios, as development patterns whose underlying cause-effect logic also informs about future structural or functional inclinations and ultimately, the finality of the complex and interlocking integration processes that compete against each other across levels, concur or happen independently from each other. The models presented hereinafter are seen to typify the most current (and obvious) relationship patterns, treating the BSR as

- a *European* region or a *subset* of the wider European integration framework;
- a *peripheral* region positioned at the *margins* of the EU system of gravity, (a model that could be seen as a variation of a);
- an *auto-dynamic entity* that emancipates from the EU framework and incorporates a more comprehensive Europeanness with border-transcending elements.

The explanatory power of these models is limited to the extent that they offer little proficiency for the identification of cause and effect chains or the exact ascertainment of independent variables underlying a relationship as complex as the one between the BSR and the EU. However, this working tool helps to structure a multidimensional research problem by offering a practicable way of depicting relationships between any sort of delimitable entities that emerge, operate and develop in the intricate system of IR.

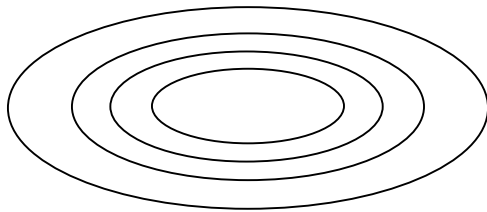
### 1. *The BSR as a Subset*

According to this model, the BSR is perceived a *sub*-region of the EU and could – drawing on the terminology of set theory (*Mengenlehre*) – be termed a “subset” that is largely framed and dominated by its “superset”, the EU polity including all its normative implications. The impact of the macro-level is perceived to dominate any regionalist action occurring at a lower level. The BSR is subordinate to the wider EU framework to the extent that both its emergence and future development is dependent on the course of the general integration process. Accordingly, regionalist action within the subset cannot be seen as detached from the broader frame of European integration.

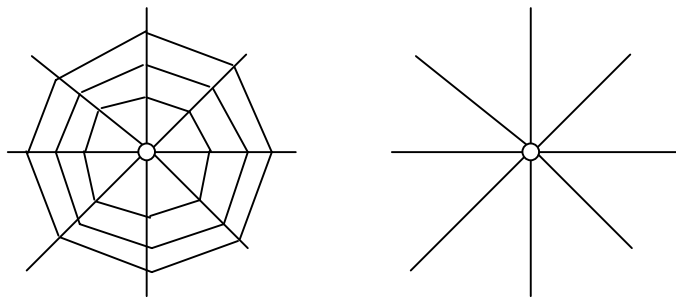


**Figure 9: Model of Explanation I: Subset vs. Superset**

A model that builds on similar considerations is the one assuming a Europe of “Concentric Circles”. It has originally entered the scholar debate in the context of general European integration and the question of a prospective “variable geometry” for the European project. The circles were then perceived to depict subgroups of member states, which have achieved or strive for different levels of integration, with the candidate countries and prospective members building some sort of ‘adjacent circle’ around the Union. A similar notion is the one of selected or ‘functional circles’ (e.g. the currency, security and defence circle) with the EU building the unifying space or centre. Applied to the context of meso-regional formations relating to a macro-level context, the EU would be interpreted as the centre and reference point for its ‘adjacent’ circles, the meso-regions on the European continent. As the ‘centre’ of this constellation, the EU would be seen to function as a regulatory power relating to its ‘outer elements’ by way of standardised and/or multilateral patterns of interaction. Applying a similar interpretation to the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, Michael Emerson suggested calling it the “Cobweb Model”. This constellation could also be illustrated as a “Hub-and-Spoke-Model”.<sup>716</sup>



*Figure 10: The Concentric Circles Model*



*Figure 11: The Cobweb and the Hub-and-Spoke Model*

These two models depict two different ways of how the macro-centre (i.e. the EU) can relate to certain regional entities or how the macro and the meso-level interact with each other. While the Cobweb Model allows both for multilateral and bilateral relations and action flows, the Hub-and-Spoke-Model clearly emphasises the bilateral element. This bilaterality can also be interpreted in terms of a differentiated approach, which involves

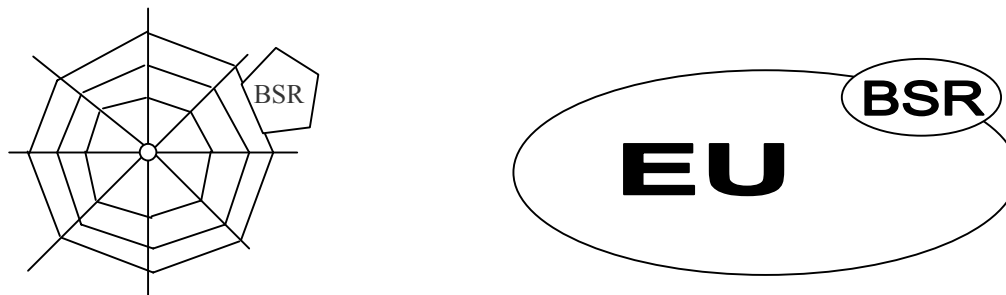
<sup>716</sup> See EMERSON Michael: European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy or Placebo? In: Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS). Working Document, No. 215/November 2004. Brussels 2004, pp. 8-9.



that the macro-core develops a specific framework for each regional entity (e.g. different nation states based in a region, or different meso-regions in Europe), seeking to take into account the individual specificities of each bilateral link ‘outwards’.

## 2. *The BSR in a Cobweb Variation: Peripheral and Marginal?*

The first model of concentric circles could be developed further by stressing certain aspects about the alleged meso-macro relationship. Assuming that the core function of the Union is very distinct and strongly pronounced so that the BSR is put into a slanting position, one could develop the following cobweb-variation.



**Figure 12: Model of Explanation II: the BSR as a Peripheral Region**

According to this model, the BSR is seen as a peripheral region situated at the very margins of the EU centre of gravity. The model is extended to the aspect of (physical) peripherality, which is thought to assume a certain air of political marginality. This model is close to the concept of “subsidiary systems” in that the EU itself including its closest neighbours is defined as a “regional system” consisting of a set of geographically proximate states with a certain perceived interdependence or interconnectedness on the political, economic and/or security level. The EU polity builds the core of this system that is surrounded by a number of “subsidiary systems encompassing the relations of a part of the regional area.”

These ‘subsidiary systems’ consist of a group of states “alienated from the core in some degree by social, political, economic and/or organizational factors but which nevertheless play a role in the politics of the [regional] system.” The peripheral sub-systems are thought to be both dependent on and conditioned by the core of the regional system.<sup>717</sup> As for the BSR example, this dependency would e.g. be consisting of the EU’s political impact (regulative/‘disciplinary’) and financial assistance (distributive relation). Many studies about the BSR follow this pattern of interpretation, mostly in the context of a general criticism of the centrality thesis that assigns everything that is perceived ‘far off’ from the centre to the political margins of the integration project. Browning underlined the importance of challenging this dominant tendency of underestimating the role of (perceived) ‘marginal’ regions in respect to the wider European integration process.

<sup>717</sup> See CANTORI Louis J./SPIEGEL Steven L.: *The International Politics of Regions. A Comparative Approach*. London 1979, p. 151.

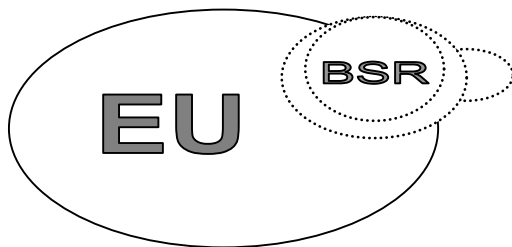
Post-modern developments in Northern Europe have challenged the very figure and subjectivity of the EU and Russia [...]. For example, there has been much discussion in Europe of whether the EU is moving in an increasingly statist direction, or if it is instead developing more along the lines of multilevel networks and interlocking dimensions. Whilst the modernist statist discourse has strengthened in recent years, elements of dimensionalism also remain significant. Importantly, Northern Europe has not just been a recipient of these different debates, but has also arguably played a notable role regarding just how Europe (and Russia) unfolds. This is to say that the wide array of projects of regional cooperation that have developed in Northern Europe since the end of the Cold War have fundamentally re-conceptualised the nature of borders in the region (including EU borders), and as such significantly problematise any Westphalian aspirations that may exist at the EU centre.<sup>718</sup>

The core message of this abstract offers the basis for yet another variation of the scheme. It seeks to grasp the issue of what repercussions the awareness about this pattern of perception (the ‘thinking the North marginal’) could have on the conduct of (sub)regional stakeholders towards the alleged centre and in view of the (sub)regional strategies they seek to pursue. If there are permanent signals of marginalisation coming from the centre, this practice is likely to influence the way region-based actors perceive their influence potential. This again can be expected to determine the strategic choices they take in order to maximise this influence towards the centre, or rather, compensate the marginality they are being assigned from outside, or in fact, from the centre.

### 3. *The BSR as an Auto-Dynamic Unit Within the Wider Unit Europe*

Building on the foregoing model of explanation, the BSR could also be seen as an auto-dynamic (albeit not autonomous) unit that *does* correlate with the wider framework ‘Europe’ to some extent but does not operate out of a consciously subordinate position or under the exclusive auspices of the EU framework. Part of the action and interaction directed to actors beyond the inner circle of European integration may be ascribed to the stakeholders’ awareness about their perceived marginality. Their awareness about their own reduced influence potential is expected to impact on their behaviour in a way that it makes them more reactive and susceptible to defensive or proactive strategies.

Signals of marginalisation coming from the centre are perceived as a challenge to the regional stand-alone quality that fuels the efforts regional stakeholders make in order to substantiate the convergence of their (sub)regional surrounding and thus, to build up a compact and solid counterpart to the alleged centre.



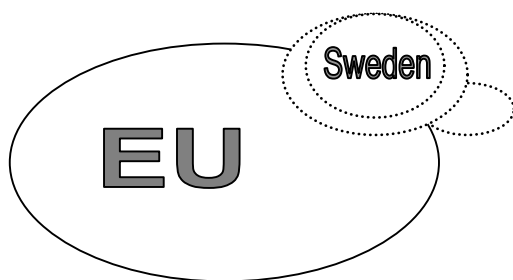
**Figure 13: Model of Explanation III: the BSR as an Auto-Dynamic Unit**

718 BROWNING Christopher S.: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): *Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements*. Aldershot 2005, pp. 1-10, here p. 6.

The major motivational background of these efforts could be termed a “positive self-awareness” of the region’s own marginality. This awareness is not only thought to provoke defensive reaction, it also inspires the regional stakeholders to develop strategies of compensation that help to impair the systemic centrality of the alleged core. One important strategy in this context has been mentioned at another point of this study.<sup>719</sup> This strategy is particularly common among the Nordic countries, but most present in the Swedish conduct on the European scene. Sweden has systematically tried (and still does) to profit politically from its own perceived marginality, trying to maintain its reputation as the “boring backwater of Europe” and thus, to gain important leeway and legitimation for its exceptionalist stance in many questions about a further deepening of European integration.<sup>720</sup> This study confirms Browning’s postulation

that a position in the margins often entails particular resources for action that enable the margins to play a significant role in shaping the nature of the whole. [...] Developments in Northern Europe may not just impact on the policies of the European centres, but to some extent also impact on the very nature and subjectivity of those centres, which in turn impacts on the nature of the broader European constellation.<sup>721</sup>

The mere fact of a region being situated in a geographically peripheral position does not automatically imply that it is also *politically* marginal. However, in essence, I would not ascribe this alleged effect coming from the Northern periphery to what Browning calls the “formative power of the margins.” Besides the fact that the choice of words itself appears somewhat esoteric, it also neglects the role of state action and interests, and most importantly, of the regional orientation of single states. States often seek to instrumentalise the action arena offered in the regional context in order to reflect their foreign political orientation at a lower scale. In a second instant, this may also be expected to determine their political conduct on the European scene, hence as formal members of the macro-level project.



**Figure 14: The Auto-Dynamic Unit as an Arena for State Action (e.g. Sweden)**

The examples of Sweden and Finland have shown that states are likely to develop very different strategies in this context. While Finland since the end of the Cold War has always sought to “europeanise” its national interests and objectives, Sweden retained most of its suspicion towards supranational integration and comprehensive Europeanisation.

<sup>719</sup> See chapter “Remoteness and Marginality – the Periphery’s Romantic Temptation”, p. 28-.

<sup>720</sup> CAVE Andrew: Finding a Role in an Enlarged EU. In: Central Europe Review, Nr. 20. 22 May 2000. Online publication [www.ce-review.org](http://www.ce-review.org) [26 November 2007].

<sup>721</sup> BROWNING Christopher S.: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements. Aldershot 2005, pp. 1-10, here p. 1.

Generally, it appears to be easy and therefore particularly attractive for peripheral states to try to establish themselves in the best possible way at the regional level before they try to counter other more influential powers that are situated closer to the core. The regional self-containedness resulting from this sort of strategic considerations may, in the long run, promote the establishment of a rival sub-system that easily removes itself from the zone of visibility, and thus, gains considerable latitude to pursue objectives independent from or even running contrary to what is suggested by the core. The hub between the meso and the macro level in this model is built by nation states. In respect to the concrete case of Baltic Sea Regionalism, they also build the natural link between the EU framework and the phenomenon of sub-regional cooperation on the basis of initiatives coming from within, or rather from below in terms of a systemic hierarchy. Even grass-root action is potentially linked to the state level, since most sub-regional cooperations can only operate when given support from the national level. For example, cross-border co-operation for regional development normally requires an improvement of transport infrastructure, of communication systems, of border control procedures, education systems etc. Such improvement measures need efforts and decisions to be taken at the national level.

Coming back to the model, this means that states based in a certain region are thought to be striving to transcend borders to the outside world (e.g. towards Russia) without employing the channels that emerge from their formal affiliation with the core. Such a tendency could potentially lead to the emergence of a region state, which is, as specified earlier in another context, a region that has reached a level of interdependence and integration that enables it to operate as a single actor.<sup>722</sup> However, looking at the concrete circumstances in the Baltic Sea case, there are no clear indicators for an emerging region state in this very sense. What could instead be told from the regional strategies of single states, and here I am again alluding to the prominent Swedish example, is that they seek to build up their own image of the region. This implies that the region or regionness is not a 'fact' in terms of a political consensus between a set of involved actors. The single state is thought to construct its own version of the region, which serves as an arena for foreign political action without having to comply with broader supranational instructions. This convenient construct builds the basis for regional action up to the level of distinct proactiveness and regional activism.<sup>723</sup>

The future development and deepening of the EU is not least a question of unity among the member states, unity about the question of finality of the European project (what Europe of the regions?). One of the imaginable scenarios could be that regionalist tendencies backfire and lead to disintegrative developments that are different from mere intergovernmentalisation (pillarisation) of integration. The question is whether the dynamic of asymmetric efforts, the "regionalist alternative", could even reinforce the existing divisions within the EU-25. Holger Moroff underlined the danger that the EU ND could, for example, further a falsely perceived regionalism within the EU and lead to the intergovernmentalisation of the European project.<sup>724</sup>

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722 See HETTNE Björn: Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia. Paper presented at the Global Seminar '96 Shonan Session', 2-6 September 2006, Hayama/Japan, pp. 3-4. See also chapter "What Makes a Region a 'Region'?", p. 32-.

723 On "regionalist activism", see chapter "Baltic Sea Region: What Sort of Regionalism'?", p. 35-.

724 See MOROFF Holger: Introduction. In: Id. (ed.): European Soft Security Policies. The Northern Dimension. Kauhava 2002, pp. 12-36, here p. 17.

In the EU official context, regionalist interactions are mostly viewed as a positive and desirable phenomenon that helps to strengthen transnational ties and thus, enhances deepening of the overall integration process. This study claims that transnational regionalism can *also* assume a counterproductive and disintegrative quality that furthers diversification and, in the context of peripheral regions, stimulates single state tendencies of isolationism and disengagement from membership responsibilities. The factor of regionalist self-sufficiency seems particularly significant in the case of the Nordic members, since their populations are among the most euro-sceptical in the EU-27. In this sense, the reading of ‘regionalism’ is fairly critical and polemic. It implies that proactive regionalism in terms of regional assertiveness can lead to region-oriented self-centeredness and self-marginalisation on the European scene. Thus, at a certain scale, regionalism can gain a highly disintegrative effect on a member state’s European policies because it potentially affects the membership conduct of the respective country.

#### 4. *What Kind of ‘Europe of the Regions’?*

The notion of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ (EoR) has originally entered usage in the context of the regional federalist movement of the 60ies and 70ies. The phrase then used to have positive if not enthusiastic implications for the future of the European project.

The EoR conceptualization seemed to serve as a handy tool for both the ‘governmentalists’ and the ‘region enthusiasts’ in describing the spatial future of the EU: the EoR was seen as much a construction of neo-nationalistic region states as one of flexible and overlapping (trans)border regions. [...] Writers recognized that questions over the nature and structure of ‘real regions’ in a regionalized Europe would remain unsolved, as the ‘region’ concept would always be interpreted in multiple ways. [...] However, it was precisely the tremendous vagueness of the region concept, and the conceptualization of the EoR for that matter – that made it so popular.<sup>725</sup>

Despite this pluralism of interpretations, in its narrow sense the notion can be said to spell the promise of a Europe in which the nation state is no longer the primary unit of action and governance. This idea is very closely connected to the vision of a federal state of Europe since the “Euro” regions are thought to constitute the principal level between the nation state and the supranational level.<sup>726</sup> In this ‘strong’ sense, the vision of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ entails the idea of emerging “region-states”; a concept that was also reflected in the aforementioned scale of regionness developed by Hettne.<sup>727</sup> Hettne suggests the highest level of “regionness” to become materialised at what he calls “an acting subject”. This state-like regionness involves that the respective region features a distinct identity, legitimacy and certain structures that allow formal joint decision-making.<sup>728</sup> The resulting actor capability of various different regions in Europe

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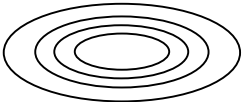
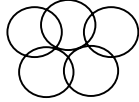
725 JUKARAINEN Pirjo: Norden is Dead. Long Live the Eastwards Faced Euro-North. Geopolitical Re-making of Norden. In: *Cooperation and Conflict*, No. 12/1999, pp. 355-382, here p. 369.

726 This sort of regionalism may occur within or across state territory or borders, involving pragmatic cooperation between regional and local authorities in areas of joint interest. For more details, see for example WEBER Karl: *Der Föderalismus*. In: EMMERICH Tálos/FALKNER Gerda (eds): *EU-Mitglied Österreich, Gegenwart und Perspektiven. Eine Zwischenbilanz*. Vienna 1996, pp. 50-66.

727 See OHMAE Kenichi: *The End of the Nation State. The Rise of Regional Economies*. New York 1995, p. 80. See chapter “What Makes a Region a ‘Region’?”, p. 32-.

728 See HETTNE Björn: *Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia*. Paper presented at the Global Seminar ‘96 Shonan Session’, 2-6 September 2006, Hayama/Japan, pp. 3-4.

would complete the picture of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ to replace the present ‘Europe of the Nation States’. The finality of this vision would be the establishment of a European federation that functions independently from the regulatory and distributive function performed by states. This concept is close to the idea of a ‘Europe of Olympic Rings’, which could be described as “a conception of Europe and the EU in which there is not one but several centres, power is dispersed throughout interlocking and overlapping regionalist formations with rather fluid external borders.”<sup>729</sup> The model suggests a polycentric structure that builds on horizontal interaction. Regional entities are perceived to co-exist and form a European (or global) patchwork net of regions.

Europe of ‘Concentric Circles’	Europe of ‘Olympic Rings’
regions subordinate to Brussels	co-existing regional spaces (‘neo-medievalisation’ of Europe)
vertical integration	horizontal interaction
distinctive centre-periphery divide	neither a clear centre nor a clear periphery <sup>730</sup>
sovereignty-based concept of space 	post-sovereignty concept 

**Figure 15: Europe of Concentric Circles vs. Europe of Olympic Rings**

The more complex the EU is becoming intrinsically, the more space will be needed for regional groupings inside it, with each increasingly likely to seek more autonomy in making contact with non-EU members. This potentially emerging structure of European political space can be metaphorically depicted as promoting an ‘Olympic rings’ vision of Europe.<sup>731</sup>

The joint effect of the two major parallel developments ‘beyond the nation state’, Europeanisation and regionalism, has been said to relativise the importance of nation states in European, and more generally, in international politics. According to this view, the state-centric distribution of the European territory does no longer seem to be the single “best”. National state borders are perceived “artificial” while ethnic or open spatial entities are seen as more natural or “really belonging together”<sup>732</sup>, or, as Wiberg and Wæver put it, they are given as a “pre-political datum”, and thus are to be perceived

729 See JOENNIEMI Pertti: Can Europe Be Told From The North? Tapping into the EU’s Northern Dimension. In: MÖLLER Frank/PEHKONEN Samu (eds): Encountering the North. Cultural Geography, International Relations, Northern Landscapes. Aldershot 2003, pp. 221-260, here p. 259.

730 The model does not fully comply with the original Olympic symbol, since no ring or unit intersects with all adjacent counterparts.

731 MAKARYCHEV Andrey S.: Where the North Meets the East. Europe’s ‘Dimensionalism’ and Poland’s ‘Marginality Strategy’. In: Cooperation and Conflict, No. 3/2004, pp. 299-315, here pp. 301-302.

732 See KEATING Michael: The European Union and the regions. Oxford 1995, p. 10.

as far more legitimate than any other structural imposition.<sup>733</sup> The self-evidence of nationality, sovereign statehood, and national written histories are said to be fading.<sup>734</sup>

In brief, the now-familiar suggestion is that nation-states will fade away in favour of regions and super-regions that can survive and thrive within the EU and the global economy. This vision is reinforced by the increasing tendency of both the EU and the regions to try to bypass the central state, often in the name of subsidiarity. Still, [...] there is as yet little evidence that central governments will fade away any time soon. Indeed, it may be the case that the popularised and overly simplistic Europe of the Regions scenario actually diverts attention away from the actual, more nuanced realities of Regionalism.<sup>735</sup>

In fact, the overall developments in European politics have made clear that there is no immediate prospect of a materialising ‘Europe of the Regions’ in the narrow sense of the concept, not least because of the widely differing strengths of regional feeling and identity among the citizens of the European Union.<sup>736</sup>

A more general and decent interpretation of the phrase ‘Europe of the Regions’ appeals to the argument that “regions matter”; this reading acknowledges the fact of regional allegiance as well as the value, in both economic and socio-political terms, of an intermediate level or interface between the local and the national or supra-national. In this sense, one might come to the conclusion that, in recent years, we have witnessed the establishment of a ‘Europe of the Regions’.

One of the most striking and important expressions of this new salience of regions in Europe has been the creation of the Committee of the Regions by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 and its coming into existence in 1994.<sup>737</sup>

The notion of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ underlying the creation of the EU CoR is built on the vision of a Europe in which regions and regional representations of various kinds have found a new self consciousness and new roles in politics and policy-making at the European level and beyond, which had hitherto been denied to them.<sup>738</sup> Another interpretation could be based on a different understanding of what regionness is about. A viable model would be, for instance, the vision of a Europe of functional regions, where common interests in certain policy fields build the basis for cooperation. This sort of integration by functional terms is then thought to occur at different scales and most importantly, without being bound by geographical adjacency. Physical closeness is still not ruled out as a factor since it could be thought to favour the build-up of ‘nodal points’ or ‘condensations of dominance’. Clusters of interest are perceived to result in a concentration along (a) certain policy fields, and (b) in regional clusters.

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733 WIBERG Håkan/WÆVER Ole: Norden in the Cold War Reality. In: Nordic Security in the 1990s. Options in the Changing Europe. London 1992, pp. 13-34, here p. 28.

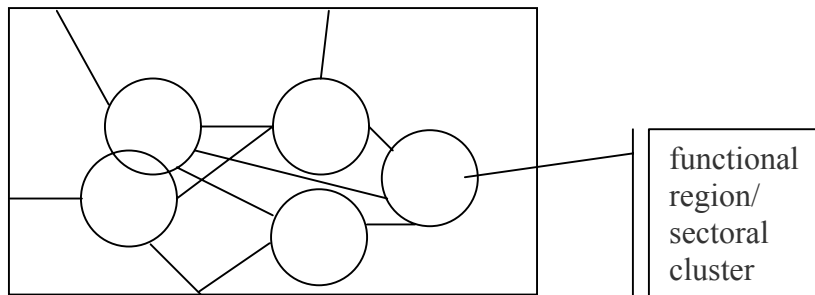
734 JOENNIEMI Pertti/WÆVER Ole (eds): Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region. Washington 1993, p. 44.

735 DOWNS William M.: Regionalism in the European Union. Key Concepts and Project Overview. In: Journal of European Integration, No. 3/2002, pp. 171-177, here p. 172.

736 See WAGSTAFF Peter: The Committee of the Regions of the European Union. In: Id. (ed.): Regionalism in the European Union. Wiltshire 1999, pp. 188-193, here p. 188.

737 LOUGHLIN John: Representing Regions in Europe. The Committee of the Regions. In: JEFFERY Charlie (ed.): The Regional Dimension of the European Union. Towards a Third Level in Europe. London/Portland 1997, pp. 147-165, here 147.

738 For more details on the CoR, see chapter “The EU Committee of the Regions”, p. 92-.



**Figure 16: Networked Europe – Functional Regionalisation**

The finality of this ‘functional regionalisation’ process would be a “networked Europe”. One of the related scenarios or variations could be a functional flexibilisation with regional clusters building on and allowing for open intersections (*offene Schnittmengen*). It may be assumed that functional considerations on either side produce certain agglomeration forces that encourage geo-political clustering of political and socio-economic activities. This clustering may result in the build-up of “functional regions”, i.e. groupings of actors on either state or sub-state level according to their positive interdependence. These agglomeration forces thus lead to sectoral clustering: one policy sector leads to clusters in a certain position, another sector in another a.s.o. The geo-political distribution of political activities is thus very concentrated in each sector but dispersed at the level of all sectors together.<sup>739</sup>

#### *E. A Short Ride into the Field of Comparative Theory*

After consulting the bulk of EIT and taking a short excursion into the field of traditional IRT, this study will eventually turn to the “third” camp, the set of comparative models and system theory. There are various different practical considerations to support the methodical choice of calling on Comparative Theory (CT) while analysing an instance of (sub)regional integration. In fact, theorists like Ernst Haas have produced significant contributions in the field of European studies, obviously viewing the analysis of the European case as a distinctly comparative-historical enterprise. In his early contributions, Haas composed systematic comparisons between various forms of regional integration that were emerging in the immediate post-war setting (including the Nordic Council, the Council of Europe, NATO, and, as yet another instance, the European Communities).<sup>740</sup> From a methodological perspective, this short ‘ride’ into the field of CT is intended to function as a showcase as for how alternative (and for some, probably also absurd) theoretical choices can offer an added value when it comes to the analysis of an empirical phenomenon as complex and multifaceted as the “Baltic Sea

739 For a detailed discussion of regional clustering in BSR trade affairs, see WIDGRÉN Mika: Trade potential, intra-industry trade and factor content of revealed comparative advantage in the Baltic Sea region. In: Elinkeinoelämän tutkimuslaitos (ETLA): Discussion papers, No. 1034. Helsinki 2006.

740 HAAS Ernst B.: International Integration: The European and the Universal Process. In: International Organization, No 4/1961, pp. 366-392. And HAAS Ernst B.: The Study of Regional Integration. Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing. In: LINDBERG Leon N./SCHEINGOLD Stuart A. (eds): Regional Integration. Theory and Research. Cambridge 1971, pp. 3-43. This very different methodological approach strongly inspired the formation of the neo-functionalist approach, which ironically, became an integral part of the bulk of self-restricted and euro-centric EIT.



Conundrum”. This exercise should help to foil the counterproductive tendency in European studies of being close to autistic i.e. EU-centric, limiting the analysis of issues related to European integration to this single European case of regional integration.

European integration has often been perceived as a unique case. Despite Giovanni Sartori’s warning that ‘he who knows only one knows none’ many EU scholars have been reluctant to consider the EU as one case within an  $n$  larger than one.<sup>741</sup>

This chapter tries to illustrate the explanatory potential of traditional and allegedly remote approaches. It will be shown that the concept of “interlocking social systems” is also capable of reconciling the application patterns identified earlier in this section.<sup>742</sup>

### *I. Structuring Social Action – Structural Functionalism by Parsons*

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), an US sociologist with a strong European background, focused his work on the concept of “social systems” and “subsystems”. Parsons is one of the most significant scholars that modern comparative theory has brought about. Building on a structural-functionalist foundation, he established one of the most prominent models in classic system theory. Keeping the scope of this study in mind, the following outline is merely intended to introduce the trial application to the Baltic Sea case. Therefore it will not be able to give adequate credit to his significant theoretical achievements.<sup>743</sup> The major question underlying Parsons’ intellectual work was that about social order. What actually inspired him to develop a model to explain social action was the puzzle that seemed to emanate inherently from the fact that society produced order where, telling from the prevalence of individual self-interest, nothing but disorder could be expected.<sup>744</sup> This focus on the systemic foundations of social organisation makes his theoretical accomplishments highly relevant for a series of thematic aspects addressed in this study.

Parsons aimed to offer a single theoretical model that could grasp the constitutive structures of “society” in terms of the abstract concept without limiting the model to certain empirical references or to certain specific examples taken from social reality. System theory perceives society as a system of social structures. These structures have to be functional in order to make the society work. Society is perceived to have needs, which have to be met in order to secure its persistence. The society as a macro-system is maintained by the contributions (social action) accomplished by social subsystems. Social action is thought to define, create and maintain the social system.<sup>745</sup> One of Parsons major theoretical accomplishments is the so-called AGIL scheme, which he developed as a sociological paradigm to explain and analyse the complex constitution of social systems including the ways different system elements interact with each other. The term “AGIL” appeals to four different functions that are thought to shape social action. They must be performed within all social systems if they are to persist.

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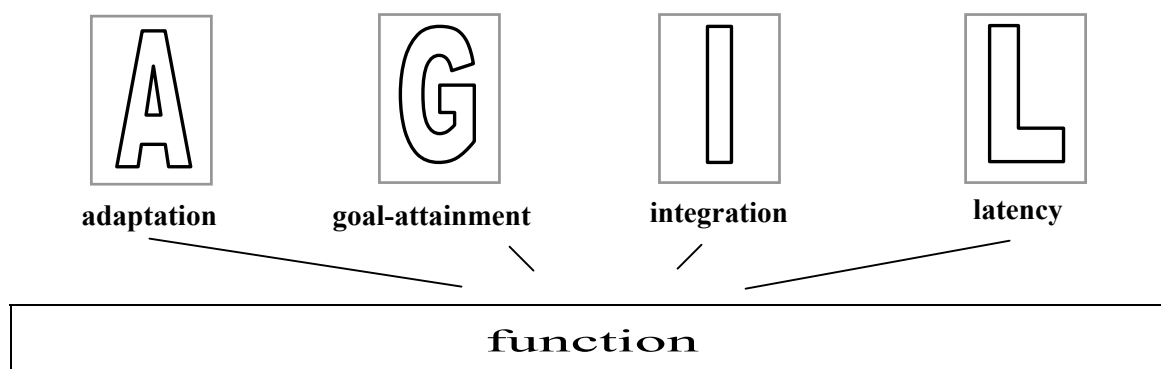
741 HOOGHE Liesbet: Prologue. In: Id. (ed.): The European Commission and the Integration of Europe. Cambridge 2001, pp. vi-xii, here p. vi.

742 See chapter “Applying Integration Theory to the Baltic Sea Case: Application Patterns”, p. 162-.

743 For more details, see PARSONS Talcott: The Structure of Social Action. New York 1937. And PARSONS Talcott: The Social System. New York 1951. And PARSONS Talcott: Sociological Theory and Modern Society. New York 1967.

744 See ADAMS Bert N./SYDIE R.A.: Sociological Theory. Pine Forge 2001, p. 349.

745 Ibid., p. 343.



**Figure 17: The AGIL pattern by Parsons**

Starting out from the AGIL scheme, Parsons tried to draw up a complex raster about the structural constitution of society. He did not only focus on the processes occurring *within* each of these functional elements; he was also particularly interested in the connection *between* them. Parsons identified various different types of social organisations that match with these four functions in a way that the overall social performance of a system is jointly secured. Each of the four functions is thought to stand for an organisational ability within society.

	ability to
A	— react to the changing external conditions
G	— secure the achievements of goals
I	— ensure the maximal level of cohesion and inclusion in the society/social system
L	— guarantee the maintenance of minimal social structure and order

**Table 24: Organisational Abilities According to the AGIL Pattern, Parsons**

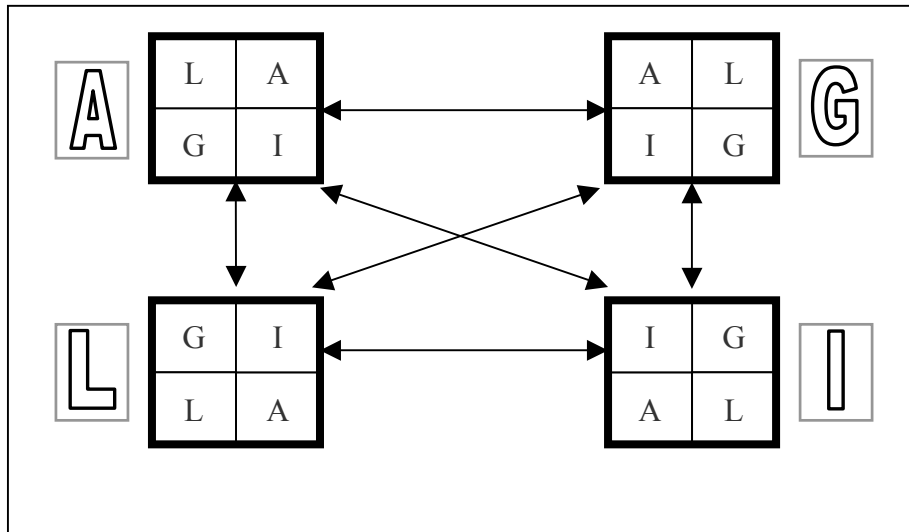
Organisational structures with different orientations for action together cover the set of functions that account for the persistence of the system.

	organisations
A	— with economic orientation (e.g. business firms)
G	— pursuing political goals (e.g. government agencies)
I	— with integrative orientation (e.g. social-control agencies, political parties)
L	— aiming at pattern maintenance (e.g. museums, religious associations)

**Table 25: Organisational Structures According to the AGIL Pattern, Parsons**

The four functions also build the constitutive character of each out of the alleged four social sub-systems, of which in turn, each represents a particular institution in society. The outputs of each subsystem are perceived to serve as inputs for the neighbouring subsystem. To put it briefly, the quadrinomial scheme is thought to shape the entire social system, being mutually reflected in all structural and procedural parts of it.<sup>746</sup>

<sup>746</sup> Figure generated on the basis of WILLKE Helmut: Systemtheorie. Stuttgart/Jena 2000, p. 232.



**Figure 18: Interlocking Input-Output System, Parsons**

Recurrent references to other abstract elements that comply with this basic AGIL pattern suggest the analytical incorporation of this systemic model by way of a schematic overview. The following raster seeks to outline how the single elements of the system are thought to be connected and in which horizontal and vertical continuing lines they are arranged.<sup>747</sup>

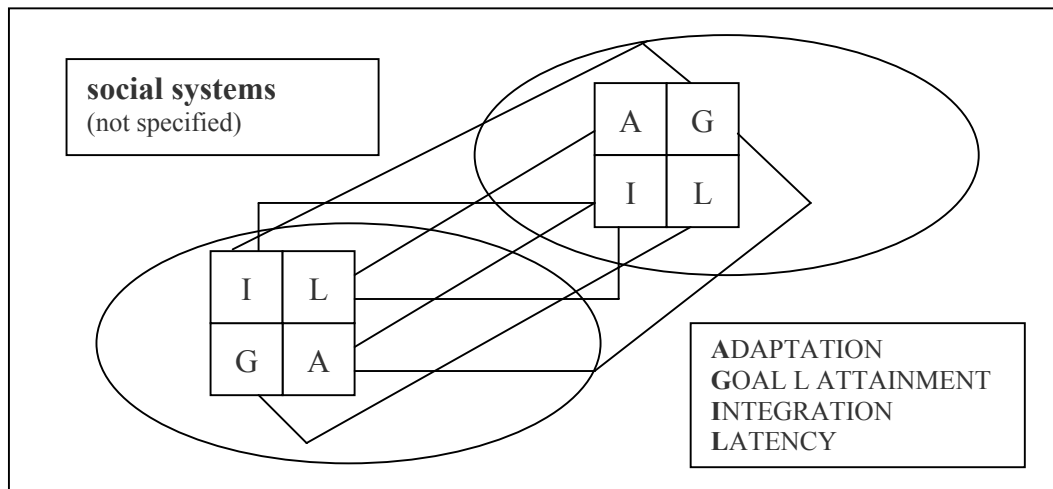
<sup>747</sup> The scheme has been generated on the basis of PARSONS Talcott: Sociological Theory and Modern Society. New York 1967.

sub-section	medium forwards functional substance	sub-system each forms part of the 'programme'	system components constitute the respective sub-system	functions fulfilment determines the persistence of the system	processes operation or transaction that fulfilled functions lead to
<b>economy business</b>	money	biological-organic individual persisting in hostile surrounding, has to stand up to systemic anarchy; adaptation in order to handle the organic world; includes the programme elements that relate to the organisation of behaviour and conduct, e.g. control of organic efficiency and achievement potential.	role determines individuals whose mutual expectations make them form a specific entity within society roles build the link between (virtually imagined) self-standing single actors and their social context (entity)	<b>A</b> adaptation to external circumstances maintaining the basic values and attitudes	maximising standards enhances accessibility
<b>politics</b> personality system  no personality system is self-standing	power	psychological-motivational the human being develops within personality and psyche. The programme elements that control behaviour at the level of motivation building, construction of personality and intrapersonal organisation of social conduct; determined through dispositions of the individual. Main driving force of all action processes and the materialisation of cultural principles; public acceptance of the state constitution is reached through socialisation and integration; enforcement only with uncontrolled action.	social entities are social groups (agglomerations of roles) with clear hierarchies and a clear internal distribution of roles and functions; serve the attainment of goals.	<b>G</b> goal attainment alignment of actors according to individual or collective goals	differentiation (internal) including pluralisation
<b>society community</b> social system	influence	social-interactive programmation on an interactive level, derivation of real society; this part of the programme controls action in the context of <i>inter-action</i> , meaning that there is a mutual element that enables and conditions reciprocity and complementarity. Society does not exert influence by way of force but through systemic control and discipline.	norms contain specific ways of action for specific entities and roles in very specific situations; they serve as an instrumental basis for integration;	<b>I</b> integration socialisation of role holders (totality of individuals) integration of the action system	inclusion of new entities and mechanisms solves problems of integration occurring in complex systems
<b>culture</b>	commitments	normative-cultural the sense of social action (value level), generation of programmes, rules and norms. Culture enables reasonable orientation in the social reality as well as selection. Any action only gains sense and meaning through culture. Norm maintenance as well as creative change are priority functions of culture. Culture enables the identification and creation of instructions for the codes and symbolic groups building the basis for inter-action.	values represent desirable types of social systems, which govern the entering of commitments through social entities. Their main function lies in maintaining norms that form the basis of social systems.	<b>L</b> latency maintenance of basic cultural patterns of orientation	socialization of values the more complex the network of social actions, the higher the level of generalisation of values; this effect serves to stabilise society

**Table 26: Schematic Overview of the Complex System Theory, Parsons**



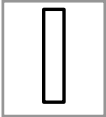
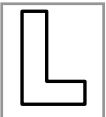
## II. Reconciling Application Patterns: Trial Application to the Baltic Sea Case

One of the major specificities of classic system theory is its claim to offer models with global applicability. Certain procedural flows are claimed to be common to all levels of social action. This universalist claim opens the scene to trial applications, such as the one to a complexly networked region like the BSR. The employment of the Parsonian AGIL scheme for the explanation of Baltic Sea social and political reality certainly imposes a series of methodological and operational problems. Choosing a very direct way of application one could discuss the various forms of how AGIL controlled and structured systems and subsystems are distributed in and across the region, and how they relate to their broader systemic framework.



*Figure 19: Complex social systems, Parsons*

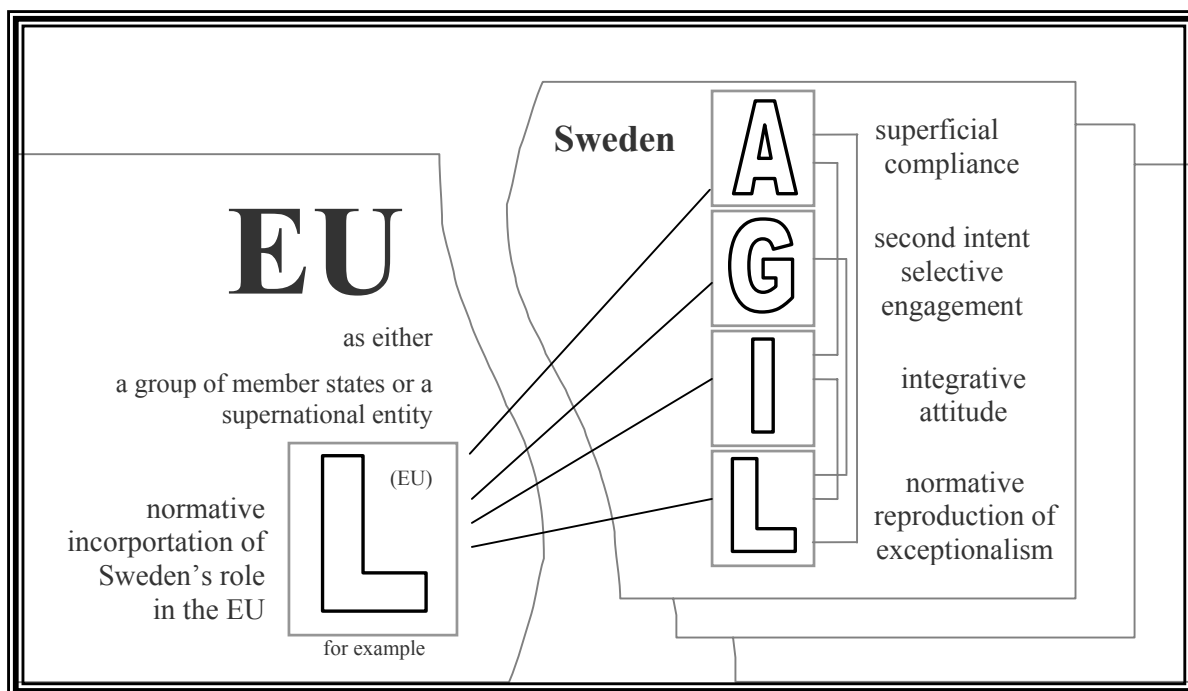
Concerning abstraction, this kind of theorisation has clearly reached the level where the identification of examples from the 'real' world becomes difficult. One could just take the complex of Baltic Sea Regionalism, pick out certain actors ("roles") or processes and try to identify in each and every case of 'what this very element is an instance.' Adjacent internationalism or regionalist activism, as identified earlier, is a formative element in Swedish foreign policy towards its immediate neighbourhood. It could be interpreted, for example, as part of a social interaction with the allegedly hostile surrounding and a reaction to the redoubtable supranationalist pressure coming from the European core. The functions maintaining the Swedish system of reluctance are performed by several parts of the social system and reproduced at the sub-system level (see figure below).

<p>superficial compliance with supranational acquis and expectations in the European scene</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>no deep-going incorporation of acquis in order to maximise added value of outsider position</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: right;">selective engagement with second intention</p>
<p>interaction with the outside world</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>integrative attitude at regional level (selective) (is seen as asset from outside – strategic objectives remain undiscovered)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: right;">reproduction of Swedish exceptionalism in national culture</p>

**Figure 20: The AGIL pattern – the example of Sweden’s regionalist activism**

This trajectory of incorporating the specific regionalist attitude of ‘adjacent activism’ or ‘internationalism’ is effected by multiple social processes. Together they substantiate political routine and the internalisation of the respective strategic action model in all parts of society. As a result, the action strategy becomes deeply incorporated; the latent patterns are reinforced repeatedly by the resulting social routine. This means that both the ‘inside’ persistence (the ‘bubble’ of Swedish self-transfiguration) and the one warranted from outside (Sweden is persistently seen as a model) are safely maintained over a long period of time. The durable disfunctionality of one of the functional entities would significantly unbalance the whole systemic process, while short-term irritations might even lead to a reinforced backlash provoking increased isolation, and thus, reinvigoration of exceptionalist attitudes and objectives.

By identifying the functional elements for each of the respective sub-systems, this depiction could, in a next step, be linked to its wider framework, the European integration complex.



*Figure 21: Swedish regionalist activism in relation to the EU framework*

The high level of abstraction of these models might be both an asset and a weakness of comparative theorising. On the one hand, it opens the analytical perspective for new ways of structuring empirical events and phenomena and allows for a broad, universal and flexible application to (apparently) very different research objects; on the other hand, it also bears the risk of turning the analytical process into an auto-dynamic act of 'thinking it to the end', and thereby, of losing track of the empirical relevance or even compliance and legitimacy.

Parsons has been criticised for mingling theoretical 'truth' with empirical evidence in the course generating inferential conclusions, and for using both in an instrumentalist and in a selective way in order to achieve a consistent line of argumentation. A similar criticism could and should certainly be raised against the preceding trial application of his model. Hence, keeping the intrinsic shortfalls of 'globalist' models of explanation in mind, this 'short ride into the field of Comparative Theory' will not conclude with a set of rigid analytical claims but rather leave the floor to a concluding statement on the theoretical incorporation of Baltic Sea Regionalism and its connection to nation state regional policy.

#### *F. Conclusions on the Theoretical Incorporation of Baltic Sea Regionalism*

This chapter will seek to gather the insights that the foregoing discussion of various different theoretical camps has brought about. The issue raised at the very beginning of this study about the '(non)sense of theorisation' shall build the overall point of reference for this conclusion of the theoretical section. The search for an appropriate theoretical foundation for the research problems addressed in this study has led us through three different strands in political theory. The first, and in respect to the topic of the study, the most obvious step in this process was to consult the bulk of (European) Integration

Theory (EIT). Despite the clear correlation between integration theory and the analysis of a 'Northern Perspective' of European Integration, it appeared important and useful to raise the question of whether and to what extent EIT does actually address the issue of 'regionness.' European integration may be seen as an instance of regional integration or regionalism.

However, the analysis has shown that still only few of the theoretical approaches consider or intentionally focus on 'regionality' in the widest sense, including independent variables such as geographical proximity or geostrategic remoteness. Instead of tracing the "regionalist" elements in every single approach, the study first set out to apply the different traditional EIT models of explanation *directly* to the Baltic Sea case. This methodological choice built on the assumption that the Baltic Sea may equally be seen and treated as an instance of regional integration and that the main theoretical claims of each approach may therefore be transferred 'downwards' from the macro European case to the 'sub'-regional case. The analytical implementation of this so-called 'application pattern I' was expected to result in a set of conclusions about the explanatory value of EIT for the purpose of *direct* application. Three major weaknesses could be identified in this context:

- The inherent *state-centricness* of most traditional approaches to European integration constitutes a major obstacle to fruitful theoretical incorporation of the subregional puzzle;
- A similar effect may be ascribed to the inherent *EU-centricness* of European EIT. Certain approaches start from distinctly European or EU-specific assumptions, overtly limiting their analytical focus on the specificities of the European case;
- Another weakness results from the above-mentioned intentional and systematic consideration of '*regionality*'; while for the Baltic Sea case elements like proximity, remoteness, cohesion, bordering and rebordering play a central role, many EIT approaches do simply not regard these factors as significant for the pursued line of argumentation.

These conclusions again show which analytical factors are particularly relevant for the composition of a comprehensive model for the 'Baltic Sea Conundrum'. Suitable approaches should

- be based on a *differentiated understanding of actorness* and consider various different types of actors (non-state, non-official actors; individuals and collectives);
- build on a comprehensive concept of integration that allows application to any (or more than one specific) instance of regionalism;
- provide appropriate room for the consideration of spatial factors and questions of regionness and regionality.

Given the modest results that the discussion of EIT theories in the context of application pattern I has brought about, the study turned to the expectedly more complex and problematic question of *relative* applicability. Application pattern II sought to address the question of how the alleged macro entity, the EU, relates to the meso-level entity, the BSR as a European region. The analytical conclusions drawn in respect to the first pattern served as an important point of reference. Instead of re-considering every single approach in line with the analytical demands of application pattern II, the study rather aimed at identifying the elements that could prove problematic or even exclusionary in



that context. To what extent would EIT be suitable for the analysis or explanation of the interrelational complex? What could hinder the establishment of a clear-cut model of explanation that builds on EIT informed presumptions?

The most significant (and in fact, decisive) drawback appeared to be the inherent inexactness or indifference of most EIT approaches concerning the relationship *between* different levels of action. Most theoretical approaches to European integration (with multilevel governance models as an obvious exception) draw a sharp line between macro-level and sub-level action. Instead of seeking to identify and analyse the linkages between the two (or more) levels, the respective political processes are largely treated as two different and distinct political phenomena. The Baltic Sea conundrum in turn seems to be substantially determined by these very cross-level interactions. Another, from the perspective of this study, unfavourable tendency in EIT results from the missing accuracy when it comes to the consideration of cross-level countervailing forces. (Sub)regionalism and macro-level (European) integration are hardly ever viewed from this angle. This habitus in EIT is reproduced in every day political parlance and interpretation, where regionalist tendencies are mostly seen as a positive side-effect (or at least, a concurrent inoffensive dynamic) of Europeanisation and post-nationalist development. This study in turn sought to consider the potential negative effects of regionalist side action and to identify the various different ways of bottom-up and top-down interaction across the entire positive-negative spectrum.

This analytical postulation of a more comprehensive theoretical framework led to the consultation of traditional International Relations Theory (IRT). This step in the working process was expected to provide important input about further analytical requirements that would eventually contribute to the construction of (rudiments of) a holistic model of explanation. The specific asset of IRT was seen in its relative universality, meaning that classic IRT does *per definitionem* not exclusively focus on one single case but rather address systemic research puzzles with a more ample focus. Given the wide spectrum of theoretical approaches available in this field and the disparity of different types of argumentation, the focus was directed to a selected IRT model, the Security Community Approach by Karl Deutsch, including its critical neo- and neo-neo-versions. Due to the extensive amount of preliminary work, meaning security community studies focussing on the Baltic Sea example, the study largely focussed on the critical evaluation of the purported analytical results of these studies. Deutsch himself has produced a seminal study in this respect, which, thanks to the broad reception of his work, happened to establish the 'Nordic case' as some sort of prototype security community. What could be derived from this section on a more abstract level and in context of the overall methodological objective of the exercise was that IRT could add a wide range of assets to the traditional study of (European) integration. The universality of the analytical categories employed (such as 'systemic entities,' elements of 'overlay' and 'subordination' and 'selective interaction') could be seen as both boon and bane. While the 'boon' obviously lies in the broad applicability of the models to very different cases, the 'bane' results from the empirical fuzziness and problem of consistent operationalisation.

Given that the SCA was selected to cover application pattern I, the incorporation of application pattern II by way of IRT-specific models constituted the next step in the working process. This is exactly where the genuine added value of IRT could unfold, its system-oriented, totally comprehensive and global perspective. In this context, it was

tried to employ the most traditional tool in IRT, the use of abstracting models, diagrams and flowcharts for the delineation of complex research puzzles. This exercise proved to provide the utmost explanatory value, since the graphing of system-oriented schemes stimulated and structured the reflection of different possible scenarios of interaction between the macro and the meso level. Even though at this level of abstraction, the deduction of direct analytical claims becomes difficult, this working step appeared to be very significant in the general course of theoretical incorporation.

In order to complete the picture, eventually, the study turned to the camp of Comparative Theory. This methodological choice was rather an inferential and logic continuation of the first two steps than a strategic move with clear analytical intentions or expected theoretical benefits. The title of the respective chapter indicates the indeterminateness (and to a certain extent, arbitrariness) of this endmost analytical action. The specific choice of Parsons' model in turn has been far less arbitrary. Earlier dealings with his analytical construct have been highly formative in the sense that the elaborateness of his theoretical accomplishments proved to be highly instructive and meaningful in many, very different analytical contexts. Moreover, it has raised sustained awareness about the factual complexity and intricacy of any social problem as multifaceted as the ones arising from this highly networked region. Positioning the 'short ride into the field of Comparative Theory' in the broader analytical working process, it can be said, that the insights gained from this exercise, retrospectively, have not least also relativised the value of the theoretical solutions offered by the other, nowadays more established theoretical camps, namely EIT and IRT.

By way of conclusion, I would like to try to draw one last overall picture of the theoretical outcomes produced in this section. The overall analytical objective of this study has been to 'elaborate a comprehensive model of explanation' that helps to grasp the 'complex virtual links between the different analytical factors at stake' (that is, the region, its European surrounding, and the specific case of Sweden and Finland). However, what has apparently been produced is an enormous bulk of theoretical considerations that might seem difficult to handle at first. I suggest the following raster for an advanced internalisation of this section. The various theoretical contributions from the different camps may be perceived as parts of a mosaic of explanatory models, in which each approach

- is concerned with another aspect about the research puzzle (e.g. small state foreign policy or regionalist discourse) and
- assumes a different function in the course of the analytical process.

Depending on its argumentative orientation and analytical perspective, each approach may assume the function of either

- explaining the research puzzle (in parts),
- describing, structuring and conceptualising the subject or
- suggesting normative interventions and raising critical awareness.

Together, the various different models should be seen to produce a complex yet consistent body of analytical arguments. Every single element in the complex is supposed to contribute to an ever more faceted and nuanced picture of the Baltic Sea Conundrum. To the disappointment of some readers, this analytical process may not have led to the development of one single macro model or 'Grand Theory of Baltic Sea

Regionalism.’ However, by having sought on the one hand, to avoid the isolation of certain approaches, and on the other, to combine various theory camps in the context of one specific research puzzle, this contribution has increased its potential to serve as a reference point for future investigation and research in the field. This practical approach was based on a vision that is similar to what Marker and Stoke described as follows:

The key challenge [in political theorising] is not to launch a campaign for unity but to argue for diversity to be combined with dialogue. [...] The discipline should avoid constructing itself into an uneasy collection of separate sects. There is a pluralism of method and approach out there that should not be denied, but it should not be ‘isolative’ but rather interactive. It should be eclectic and synergistic. That is what is meant by our claim to celebrate diversity. We argue that political science is enriched by the variety of approaches that are adopted within the discipline. Each has something of considerable value to offer. But each benefits from its interaction with other approaches.<sup>748</sup>

I would like to close this chapter with a statement by A. Moravcsik, which obviously seeks to score with false modesty, but however, is in a way inarguably true.

It is always prudent to remember that the world contains more complexity than any single theory can encompass.<sup>749</sup>

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748 MARSH David/ STOKER Gerry: Introduction. In: Idd. (eds): *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. London 2001, pp. 1-16, here p. 4.

749 MORAVCSIK Andrew: ‘Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?’ Constructivism and European Integration. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4, Special Issue 1999, pp. 669-681, here p. 672.

## Summary – Questions and Answers

*Which labels are commonly used to denominate geo-political entities in Northern Europe? And how do they relate to each other?*

The question of geopolitical terminology in Northern Europe has proved to be more demanding and problematic than it could have been expected. Common notions like the “Nordic” and the “Baltic States” or “Northern Europe” and “Scandinavia” can, in a regional context, have significant political and ideological connotations that do not always find support within the respective entity. The Baltic Sea Region (BSR) is extremely dense in terms of overlapping and intersecting geopolitical labels. The confusing variety of expressions could lead to the inference that their use is largely arbitrary, and thus, that a differentiating terminological discussion is not relevant. However, considering the frequency of political discussions on these questions as well as the evident employment of concise definition in political speech, it becomes clear that an empathetic approach to this issue is absolutely necessary. In brief, the study has come to the following code of geopolitical labels.

Nordic Countries	Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland
Northern Europe	European Russia, Northern Germany, Northern Poland, Scandinavia, Baltic States
Scandinavia	Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland
Scandinavian Baltic	Sweden, Denmark and Finland
Baltic States	Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland
Baltic Sea Region	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, as well as the German Länder of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen ( <i>Regierungsbezirk Lüneburg</i> )

*Which political and geographical features determine the character of the BSR? In what way and to what extent do these specificities influence or determine politics in the region?*

The BSR could be characterised with the following catchwords: harsh climate, remoteness, ecological vulnerability, socio-economic disparity, geostrategic exposedness and insularity. This set of BSR specificities is, in various different respects, both curse and blessing. On the one hand, the states and regional entities situated in the BSR have to face the obvious disadvantages resulting from their distinct geopolitical position. On the other hand, these very circumstances together build some sort of empirical foundation for the traditional Nordic attitude of exclusiveness and reluctance. This study has come to the conclusion that a geographically remote position stimulates isolationist state behaviour and enhances tendencies of relative compliance towards an alleged supranational core. This means that EU Member States situated in these geographical positions show an increased propensity for exceptionalist policy solutions and, in terms of ideological internalisation, for relative or ‘false’ compliance with formal membership commitments. This attitude often entails a euro-scepticist rate in the public that is above average.

*How do these BSR specificities influence the way the region is seen from outside?*

States and regions situated at the margins of a continent or a political community are often associated with the idea of marginality in the sense of lacking political and strategic significance. Geographically remote areas are thought to be politically unimportant, or at least secondary in respect to the more central regions. This study has been based on the assumption that due to this common way of 'thinking the periphery marginal,' states situated in these areas are particularly inclined to develop distinct identities, and in a next step, exceptionalist or isolationist policy solutions. I treated this question also under the headline of "the periphery's romantic temptation." This is an allusion to the current habit of romanticising the periphery, and even more so, the Northern 'margins' of Europe. In many contexts, Northern Europe, if ever it is not regarded as a 'blank spot' on the power political map of Europe, is treated as a marker with a pre-given and unproblematic status. Northernness is often associated with value-laden categories like the "Nordic spirit" and the "Arctic mystery." Northern Europe is subjected to the arbitrary application of enthusiastic concepts that personate it as something extraordinarily different, and moreover, qualitatively superior or even supernatural. Actors based in the region are seen as largely inoffensive, tolerant and libertarian as well as harmless in the context of 'realist' power politics. As a consequence, the fact that Northern European states follow the logic of power maximisation and strategic self-assertion just as much as the more 'central' ones do, is often neglected. This study has come to the conclusion that the respective states have another choice than just to accept this imposed image. The analysis has shown that some states use this lack of interest and attention in order to establish alternative systems of political self-actualisation. They reduce their international commitment to the minimum and turn their attention to surrogate ambitions.

*What accounts for Baltic Sea "regionness"? What makes the BSR a "region"?*

Defining the BSR in terms of drawing sharp and clear geographical borders seems both difficult and problematic. The "Baltic Sea Region" is indeed thought to be about much more than just a simple conglomeration of national or sub-state entities. Accordingly, this study has tried to identify the various different ways, theorists have found to define regionness as such. Starting out from the mere notion of an entity constituted by a group of geographically adjacent areas, the analysis has led to more sophisticated models of explanation, such as the one of 'functional regions' or 'region states.' These conceptual considerations did not aim at the identification of *the one* single valid definition. This assessment of existing approaches rather served to prepare the theoretical discussion undertaken later on in the analysis.

*How and on what grounds did Baltic Sea Regionalism emerge after 1989?*

In the early 1990s, the BSR has seen the proliferation of an enormous number of regional initiatives, associations, councils and platforms. The specific international circumstances that resulted from the end of the Cold War paved the way for regional cooperation across the Baltic Sea Rim. This process of region-building across the former East-West divide has often been referred to as the "Nordic Boom," the Rise of the "New North" or "New Regionalism." Promoted by the decentralisation of the

international system and the removal of the superpower overlay, both the number of regional organisations and interest in what was called “Baltic Sea Regionalism” grew exponentially. There is no consensus in academia about who its real founding fathers were, and where exactly to allocate the starting point of Baltic Sea Regionalism. In fact, the way this phenomenon emerged should not be imagined as a clear-cut process of progressive, gradual and controlled regionalisation. There were many parallel and partly diverging region-building projects that characterised the early phase of ‘constructing the region,’ which turns this distinct course of development into a veritable repository for enhanced analytical investigation. Today’s BSR can be said to be the most networked, and therefore, among the most complex regions in Europe.

*How did the newly emerging cooperative structures interact with other (already existing and established) formations in the ‘Old North’, such as classic “Nordic Cooperation”?*

During the Cold War, Nordic cooperation tried to overcome the limits of state-centric strategies and instead, built on a deep societal and cultural commonality. *Norden* was largely an island of well-being, commonsense, tranquillity, low tension, security and stability which enabled the Nordic states to establish some sort of ‘third way’ in international politics that became known as the “Nordic model” or “Nordic balance.” This study has come to the conclusion that both the fall of the bipolar overlay and the EU accession of Denmark, Sweden and Finland had a strong “nationalising” effect within the Nordic formation. Both events have obviously enhanced competition and as a result, the mere aspect of being “Nordic” has lost most of its binding effect. A major reason for this might be that the instrument of othering has suddenly become more difficult to apply, meaning the diversification of neighbours and regional partners); in fact, given the international air of togetherness and integration at that time, the North could no longer construct itself in opposition to Europe. The EU accession of the Baltic States made them less “different” or “other.” Hence, it became more difficult for the Nordics to distance themselves in the purported exclusivist manner. The shift of *Norden* towards the BSR and thus towards more Europeaness also implied that the most challenging and proximate security threats were more and more expected to be handled on a European or at least, a Europeanised level. What then actually remained for the Nordic system of cooperation was mostly located in the field of soft-soft policies, such as culture, research and education. The analysis of the Swedish-Finnish relationship has shown that since the end of the Cold War, the intra-Nordic atmosphere has been largely dominated by an air of soft competition and diverging concepts of regional politics and integration.

*How can Sweden and Finland be characterised in respect of their basic concept about European integration and in what way does this determine the way they perceive their strategic roles in the BSR?*

Sweden and Finland have very different ideas about the basic value and function of their EU membership. Right from the beginning, their interaction with the supranational level of the Union has been based on very different conceptual foundations and expectations. While for Sweden, the choice to join the European Union was based on strong economic motives and concerns, the Finnish approach has been overtly affirmative from the beginning. Even though Finland also expected a set of direct advantages, it did not

reduce its motivation to these prospects. The Finnish accession was strongly marked by the idea of 'leaving the past behind' and 'returning to Europe.' Its profile as a formal member has in turn been clearly pragmatic and goal-oriented. Finland tried to fulfil its responsibilities as a loyal and solidary fellow member and part of the project, but has still never been reluctant to try to gain the most benefit from the fact of 'being in the club.' Finland has joined the Monetary Union and established itself as a fervent advocate of the 2004 enlargements. Hence, the modest success of its major geopolitical project, the Northern Dimension, has been a very frustrating experience for the Finns. Sweden on the other hand, has well tried to be a compliant and unobtrusive member, however, lacking genuine commitment to the overall objectives of European integration. In many key issues of European integration, Sweden has assumed an exceptionalist or reluctant position. The Swedes have rejected the single currency, and still today, they are among the most euro-sceptical populations among the EU-25/7. Sweden has evidently sought to establish a low membership profile, intending to gain important leeway for alternative (bilateral or decentralised) political arenas. This distinct character of the two states in respect to European integration is reproduced in their specific conduct on the regional level. While Finland has tendentially been more in favour of 'getting the Union involved,' Sweden has always been keen to reduce the 'outside' impact coming from Brussels. From a Swedish point of view, the regional working agenda should by no means be systematically or formally linked to the institutional structure of the EU. Accordingly, Sweden has also been very sceptical about the Finnish attempts to establish a "Northern Dimension" of EU external action.

*How did the Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative emerge and which development has it taken in the first years?*

The Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative launched in the end of the 1990s constitutes one of the most important results of the Finnish EU membership. By way of this initiative, Finland tried to direct the Union's attention to the Northern part of the continent and to enhance interest by other external stakeholders (Norway, Iceland, and most importantly Finland). However, in the first years of its existence, the policy has quickly lost momentum, facing a set of structural problems, and additionally, being hampered by lacking outside interest. Sweden has never been convinced about the added value of the policy. Hence, instead of supporting its Nordic fellow it chose to pursue other, less "supranational" channels in order to materialise its regional interests. Given this extraordinarily bad start of the policy, Finland has recently sought to revive its foreign political flagship by way of promoting a "New Northern Dimension" in the context of its EU Presidency in the second half of 2006. It tried to stimulate genuine commitment by way of restating the importance of the policy concept and by way of emphasising the added value the policy could bring for all partners involved. Given the reserved attitude of Sweden (and in parts of Denmark) and the obvious lack of interest on the side of the European Commission, the long-term effectiveness of this new initiative appears questionable. Moreover, the Finnish ambitions are increasingly sidelined by other EU policies, most importantly the European Neighbourhood Policy, whose implementation has recently lead to significant innovations in the field of regional and cross-border cooperation.

*Which models of explanation could be employed in order to approach the Baltic Sea Conundrum from a more abstract perspective?*

In search of an answer to this important question, the study has followed an extensive path of trial theorisation, consulting various different camps in political theory. These trial applications could, keeping the scope of the study in mind, certainly not be exhaustive in every case. However, the whole apparently completed exercise has nevertheless led to the conclusion that a research puzzle as multifaceted and complex as the one of Baltic Sea Regionalism would actually necessitate even more theoretical prudence and comprehensiveness in order to be ultimately adequate.

At the beginning of this study, I claimed for a comprehensive analytical framework that does not subjugate the empirical puzzle for the sake of clear-cut and consistent analytical outcomes. Many studies that follow a rigid theoretical framework tend to limit their analytical effort to the reproduction of certain abstract claims established in a detached context (as this is just what most theories are about). Studies that announce right at the beginning that their analysis is informed by a certain approach are likely to miss out important aspects about the phenomenon and to fail to contribute in a substantial way to the existing bulk of expertise in a certain field of empirical research. Seeking to counter this effect, in this study, the theoretical section is put to the very end. This should, however, not create the impression that the first parts are less elaborate or indeed, less accurate and legitimate in terms of the academic code of conduct. I would like to support this claim by asseverating that the theoretical considerations have guided every single step in the course of the more 'empirical' parts of the study. To a very large extent, this study has been written 'backwards', in fact, the first two sections have been the last ones to be completed.

Which model does then solve the 'Baltic Sea Conundrum'?

This study never really set out to decrypt or even solve the Baltic Sea Conundrum. In fact, drawing a global picture of a matter as complex and multi-faceted as Baltic Sea Regionalism on the basis of a rigid and straightforward analytical pattern appears neither feasible nor desirable. The overall analytical aim of 'elaborating a comprehensive model of explanation' could nevertheless be met in the sense that both the terminological and the theoretical considerations made in the course of this study are likely to have contributed to the understanding of the research subject as such. The added value of this study arises from the pursued trajectory of conceptualisation, abstract identification and theoretical incorporation of the various elements of the research puzzle, and can thus not be subsumed in the framework of an abstract or chapter. With each analytical step, from the development of a clear terminology to the conceptualisation of regionness and regionalism as well as to the critical evaluation of Sweden's and Finland's regional performance, this study has strived to move closer to the core of the subject matter. Hence, the fact that it has not resulted in a clear-cut model of explanation to cover all aspects of the thematic complex, must not be perceived as a failure but rather as part of the analytical outcome.



## Epilogue

### *Anything more to say about the theoretical incorporation of Baltic Sea Regionalism?*

This study has led the reader through an extensive process of theoretical abstraction and consideration, crossing various fields in political theory and trying to consider a wide array of different approaches and theoretical traditions. At this point, I am not planning to return to the single arguments in detail. Even less so, would it be appropriate (or viable indeed) to give a specific comment and outlook for each of the numerous models and approaches discussed earlier herein. However, there still seems to be room for a few critical comments, which might stimulate further discussion and research interest in these respects.

By way of conclusion, I would like to turn once again to one of the most frequent theoretical models employed in the wider field of Baltic Sea Regionalism, which is, Social Constructivism. In the years following the end of the Cold War, hence the years, in which the phenomenon of “New Regionalism” emerged in Northern Europe, Social Constructivist contributions, literally flooded the field. As a result, arguing on Constructivist grounds has long since become a question of bon ton in Baltic Sea Regionalism studies. The defensive tone of early Constructivist contributions has even created the impression that only a Constructivist could be a ‘good’ Baltic Sea analyst. The region and its distinct structural development has indeed offered a veritable laboratory for theoretical excursions of any kind, and given the value-laden character of much political discourse in the BSR, it might well have been a veritable repository for Constructivist experiments. The Constructivist claim that everything in politics and society is (discursively) constructed, and thus also many elements within the complex of Baltic Sea Regionalism (most significantly, the region itself) has been proliferated in many different contexts of the Baltic Sea debate, but with consistent sophisticated eloquence and bold creativity. In fact, Constructivists have been among the most productive region ‘constructors,’ in the sense that they contributed abundantly to the process of ‘talking the region into existence.’ Constructivists were often inclined to infer a major constructive process or discursive region-building element where there was nothing more than an accidental misstatement, or simply, a bad uninspired speech.

The polemic assertion that Constructivist scholars themselves have been more ‘constructive’ and virtually activist than any other allegedly eager ‘region-builder’ on the political scene would certainly be countered by some, pointing at the existing Constructivist claim that indeed, scholars, analysts and policy consultants are well-known and established elements in the purported process of region-building. While for some individuals in the Constructivist camp that really have these informal affiliations with regional actors or activists this might certainly apply, the large amount of ‘outsiders’ in this regard must not be neglected. Many analysts that have published abundantly on the Baltic Sea actually operate from remote places, and just as myself, have no influence on or whatsoever role in the ‘real’ political process of region-building. This large group of fervent ‘Constructivist outsiders’ (in terms of both their physical position and functional role in the process) have, turned the region into some sort of playground for reflectivist experiments and the literal ‘construction’ of elements of regionness that in essence, find little to null empirical evidence. The numerous problems about this sort of self-reproducing (allegedly empirical) research have been

extensively discussed in the introductory part of this study and have then been taken up again in the respective theoretical chapters. However, in short, the criticism is about *declared* constructivist studies that often end up in a maelstrom of self-affirmative theoretical constructs that have little empirical relevance or even legitimacy. Social Constructivists often just add alleged 'empirical' elements to their highly hypothetical monologues apparently expecting to create the impression of serious empiricist involvement that could help them to foil the permanent denunciations by realist and rationalist colleagues.

I will not miss the chance of giving a concrete example. Constructivists have recurrently claimed that a main constitutive factor in the process of establishing the Baltic Sea area as a 'region' has been the tactical employment of argumentative strategies such as, most prominently, the so-called history tool. In line with this argumentation, alleged region builders (individuals or collective actors, officials or non-officials that are thought to be keen to establish or 'construct' a region) intentionally "write or speak the region into existence" by discursively availing themselves of so-called 'raw material' (i.e. any kind of argumentative substance that qualifies for the discursive construction of a region). A very common aspect that has been repeatedly 'identified' by many Constructivist analysts is, for example, the 'Hanseatic' argument. Region builders are said to employ this historical reference in a way that it serves them to 'sell' their regionalist ambitions under very different circumstances, and hence, under 'false' pretences. What sounds quite legitimate at first, does, in many cases, lack sufficient empirical evidence that would allow the analyst to actually infer a broader mechanism or phenomenon. While this has been done repeatedly and with few indications of honest self-criticism, hardly any exponent of the approach has ever set out to verify this claim in reference to a more comprehensive set of empirical data. Constructivists have produced very bold claims about the 'social origins' of Baltic Sea Regionalism. However, there have so far been no major attempts to produce quantifiable material to test these assertions on a larger scale. This study in turn has sought to compensate this lack of systematically gathered material. I would like to be brief on the respective outcomes. A comprehensive assessment of several regional organisations in the BSR and of their respective argumentative foundations has shown that about 28 out of 30 examples have never in the course of their existence, seen the employment of any sort of 'constructed' or 'constructive' element in political or social discourse. Most associations and initiatives founded their regionalist activities *directly* on nothing but 'raw material', conceivable challenges, apparent threats and environmental concerns. Very few of them rely on the 'history argument' or other argumentative tools that would stimulate the proliferation of certain spatial imaginations. What can be added to this evidence is that in essence, regions should not be thought to be (exclusively) 'spoken into existence.' If the pre-given physical and normative foundations do not allow for a comprehensive regionness, discourse cannot 'construct' any material entity whatsoever. Regional entities merge on the basis of certain pre-given empirical conditions. Discourse may be supportive of such activities or intents but it cannot assume any major (or even decisive) constructive function. The criticism about the production of analytical claims without sufficient empirical evidence could in some variation certainly be extended to many other theoretical approaches. Whether drawing upon a distant sociological approach can put things right, might be arguable. Parsons' model certainly lacks empirical measurability no less than Social Constructivism does. However, I leave the latter standing here alone

since its numerous exponents operating in the field of Baltic Sea Studies have been so particularly keen to expose themselves in a way that has no parallel in terms of self-confidence, which in essence, is not yet a flaw, and very often, arrogance, which is a flaw in any case.

## Annex: Baltic Sea Associations and Structures in Detail

### *Ars Baltica*

Acronym	--
Founding year/launched in	1991
Website	<a href="http://www.ars-baltica.net">www.ars-baltica.net</a>
Governance model	transnational forum and network
Policy field(s)	culture
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS
Members and actors	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Russia individual project leaders

Ars Baltica aims at strengthening the cultural collaboration between the Baltic Sea States. It is based on two action pillars: one is related to the concertation and coordination in cultural policy development, the other consists of close cooperation between various different project contributors that cooperate in the framework of the network. The main objective of the network is to increase the international significance of the BSR as a cultural region. It builds on the assumption that culture should be promoted as a tool for handling social and educational issues. The practical aim is to offer a forum for cultural cooperation across the Baltic Sea rim, actively involving individual project leaders in order to give them an opportunity to voice their ideas and needs and to get into contact with the political decision-makers at national level. Some of the objectives of Ars Baltica go beyond the catchment area: it aims to establish and maintain strong links to other cultural organisations and networks in Europe and to promote the Baltic Sea cultural life outside the region. More generally, the network seeks to promote the value of regions and the significance of regional and inter-regional cooperation.

### *Association of Castles and Museums around the Baltic Sea (ACMBS)*

Acronym	ACMBS
Founding year/launched in	1991
Website	<a href="http://www.baltic-castles.org">www.baltic-castles.org</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field(s)	art, culture, tourism
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	Heritage Cooperation of the Baltic Sea States
Members and actors	national representatives, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland administrations of single museums and castles

The Association was founded in 1991 on the castle of Malbork (PL), following the initiative of a Polish castle administrator. The association brings together 31 castles and museums stretching across the territory of the nine Baltic Sea States (Sweden 1, Denmark 5, Germany 4, Poland 1, Lithuania 2, Latvia 6, Estonia 2, Russia 4, and Finland 6). The institutional structure of the association includes a General Assembly meeting annually, a Board that meets twice a year and consists of the national representatives of the member countries and a working group that is responsible for the preparation of lectures and annual meetings. The Association is intended to enable non-political and non-profitable cooperation between castles and museums around the Baltic Sea. Its major strategic aim is to increase the overall understanding of the cultural heritage among its members and to establish a network for teaching and learning among specialists in the field. The working activities are organised in six pillars: research, education, restoration, management, marketing and tourism.

### *Baltic 21*

Acronym	--
Founding year/launched in	1996
Website	<a href="http://www.baltic21.org">www.baltic21.org</a>
Governance model	embedded project
Policy field(s)	spatial planning, sustainable development, environment
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	high
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS, BSSYA, BSSSC, HELCOM, VASAB 2010, BLA21F, KBT, BTC, PPO, BUP, CCB
Members and actors	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, European Commission official and non-official actors, public and private sector;

Baltic 21 is a regional multi-stakeholder process for sustainable development initiated in 1996 by the Prime Ministers from the eleven CBSS member states. It is designed alongside the UN model for an Agenda 21. The BSR has been the first region in the world to adopt common regional goals for sustainable development. The strategic objective of Baltic 21 is to pursue sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region by regional multi-stakeholder co-operation. Accordingly, Baltic 21 provides a regional network to implement the globally agreed Agenda 21 and World Summit on Sustainable Development activities, while focusing on the regional context of sustainable development in its three dimensions (the environmental, the economic and the social). The Baltic 21 working agenda is divided into seven sectors: agriculture, education, energy, fisheries, forests, industry, tourism, transport, and spatial planning. Its institutional structure consists of

- a steering group, the so-called Senior Officials Group (SOG) consisting of representatives from the CBSS member states, the European Commission, various

- international and non-governmental organisations as well as representatives from regional and sub-regional networks and formations;
- a bureau supporting the SOG,
- Working Groups for each thematic sector,
- General Secretariat based in Stockholm (working unit within the CBSS Secretariat).

Baltic 21 members are the CBSS member states, the European Commission, inter-governmental organisations, international financial institutions, international sub-regional, city and business community networks and other international non-governmental networks.

### *Baltic BioTech Forum*

See ScanBalt – the Network of Networks

### *Baltic Cooperation Forum (BCF)*

Acronym	BCF
Founding year/launched in	1994
Website	<a href="http://www.baltic-cooperation.eu">www.baltic-cooperation.eu</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	trade, business, industry
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	Hanseatic Parliament
Members and actors	non-governmental organisations based in the BSR, chambers of crafts, trade, industry and commerce

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from all around the world interested in setting up a business venture in the area form the main target group the network seeks to catch. It intends to provide a network structure to communicate outside interest in the region and to build a hub that coordinates interactions and arranges new relationships between outside actors and regional stakeholders. By offering a field-specific internet platform the network seeks to provide a communication forum for SMEs. It forms part of Europe-wide efforts to strengthen networking between skilled crafts and SMEs. The establishment of the network has been strongly backed by the Hanseatic Parliament. In fact, the two organisations still uphold very strong cooperative links. The BCF is also financially supported by the EU (however, there are no formal links on the institutional side).

### *Baltic Development Forum (BDF)*

Acronym	BDF
Founding year/launched in	1998
Website	<a href="http://www.bdforum.org">www.bdforum.org</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	business, competition
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low

Cluster/organisational links to Members and actors	CBSS (informal) including officialsm and non-official participants from academia, media and business
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The BDF is an independent non-profit networking organisation. It was established in November 1998, on initiative of the former Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. He emphasised the need of BSR decision makers for an open discussion platform where debates about overall regional development strategies could take place. As from 2001 the BDF is organised as a membership-based association. It offers participation to a particularly wide spectrum of different actors: it includes political organs as well as business players, actors from academia and the media. The members are companies, governments, public as well as non-official organisations and cities willing to contribute to the development of the BSR. The network involves more than 2 500 decision-makers from all over the region and beyond. The primary mission of the BDF is to promote the BSR as an integrated, prosperous and internationally competitive growth region. The BDF Honorary and Advisory Boards consist of a group of high-level political dignitaries and prominent business executives representing the entire Baltic Sea Region. The BDF perceives itself “the leading high-level and agenda-setting networking organisation in Northern Europe and unique platform for innovative thinking, informal cross-sector/cross-border/cross-level encounters and concrete new business opportunities with a global perspective.” It seeks to facilitate and develop new initiatives, partnerships and international contacts to stimulate growth, innovation and competitiveness in the BSR. The overall strategic aim is to develop the BSR as a global centre of excellence and to establish the Region internationally as a strong and attractive regional brand. The BDF tries to maintain very close ties to the BSR business community, and therefore, perceives its overall goals as “business-driven”. One of the organisational key concepts promoted by the BDF is transparency, both in respect to business interests and political differences. The network is generally designed to bring various different actors from all sectors together, to identify focal issues in the course of discursive exchange, and then, to develop strategies that help the key stakeholders to identify and materialise actionable objectives. BDF tries to ensure common benefits through mutual understanding. The establishment of strong visibility is seen as the key to strengthening the region internationally.

*Baltic Environmental Information Dissemination System (BEIDS)*

Acronym	BEIDS
Founding year/launched in	1998
Website	<a href="http://beids.tec-hh.net">http://beids.tec-hh.net</a>
Governance model	embedded project (Baltic 21)
Policy field	environment, energy, transport
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	? (project-oriented)
Cluster/organisational links to	VASAB 2010, HELCOM and other projects (e.g. BALTICOM, BERNET), BALLERINA;
Members and actors	states, represented by non-official project leaders Denmark, Germany, Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden

The project aims at the circulation of intelligent information on environment, energy, transport and sustainable development issues. By providing a wide-ranging network and dissemination infrastructure, BEIDS tries to contribute to networking and know-how exchange in the region and to complement efforts towards transregional cooperation in sustainable planning. The project is embedded in the wider framework of Baltic 21.<sup>750</sup> Before Lithuania and Poland became full member states of the European Union, the project framework was largely intended to establish cooperative links across the Union's borders. The main objective was to raise ecological awareness, mostly among non-EU-member states in order to facilitate the implementation of existing EU instruments in the region and beyond its borders. Today, this transborder effect is focussed on Russia, while Lithuania and Poland find themselves within the Union and are thus more strongly involved in the process of strategic aim development. By making its database available to other projects and associations, BEIDS seeks to establish links within the field of environment and sustainable development. The major consideration lying at the basis of the project is the awareness about the need to strengthen the development potential of the countries involved. Among the beneficiaries and project partners are government agencies, officials and private planners, small, medium and large firms in the energy and transport sector, municipalities, local actors, research organisations as well as NGOs active in the field and area.

*Baltic Institute of Finland (BIF)*

Acronym	BIF
Founding year/launched in	1994
Website	<a href="http://www.baltic.org">www.baltic.org</a>
Governance model	self-standing institution
Policy field	all topical issues
Organising principle	--
Degree of institutionalisation	high
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	--

The BIF is an independent organisation, which promotes multinational cooperation and joint projects in the BSR. It is based in the Finnish town of Tampere. The fundamental purpose of the Institute is to contribute to the development of the Baltic Sea cooperation. The institute's activities materialise in concrete commercial, administrative, educational and cultural development projects. Additionally, the institute organises seminars and workshops dealing with topical issues concerning the BSR. The institute collects and distributes information about current trends and themes within the area. The institute perceives itself an essential part of the cooperation network which has emerged in the BSR during the past decade. All activities include partners from various countries around the Baltic Sea (including Russia). The institute is maintained by the Foundation for the Baltic Institute, which was founded by the City of Tampere for this very purpose.

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<sup>750</sup> See respective chapter in this annex.



### *Baltic Metropolises Network (BaltMet)*

Acronym	BaltMet
Founding year/launched in	2002
Website	<a href="http://www.baltmet.org">www.baltmet.org</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	competitiveness, innovation, technology, research
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	BDF
Members and actors	official city representations, on request state authorities, on-member cities; Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Malmö, Oslo, Riga, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Vilnius, Warsaw;

The BaltMet Network was founded in October 2002, following the objective of providing the cities in the BSR with an informal structural framework to foster transnational cooperation. The network addresses capitals and large metropolitan cities all around the Baltic Sea, focussing in particular on the establishment of cooperative relations between the network members and partner cities as well as academic and business players based or active in the BSR. The network also addresses issues of inclusive Baltic Sea identity-building which is seen to form the basis for promoting and marketing the region internationally. The founding fathers of the network explicitly refer to the wider context of the Lisbon agenda claiming to pursue the goal of actively contributing to its realisation. Hence, the network holds an official content-related link to the regional working agenda of the EU.

### *Baltic Island Network (B7)*

Acronym	B7
Founding year/launched in	1989
Website	<a href="http://www.b7.org">www.b7.org</a>
Governance model	TNW
Policy field	economy, spatial development,
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS, UBC
Members and actors	islands in the BSR

B7 is a network of the 7 largest islands in the Baltic Sea including Bornholm/Denmark, Gotland/Sweden, Hiiumaa/Estonia, Rügen/Germany, Saaremaa/Estonia, Åland/Finland, and Öland/Sweden. The network seeks to minimise the permanent constraints that put islands at a comparative and competitive disadvantage to the mainland while still being required to offer their citizens the basic range of services and quality of life. B7 works to encourage the social, economic and spatial development of the islands to build on their uniqueness, promote cultural understanding and to learn through exchange of experiences and ideas. The B7 has an annual rotating Chairmanship and Secretariat. The network also has working groups specialising in environmental and social issues.

### *Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum (BLA21F)*

Acronym	BLA21F
Founding year/launched in	1997
Website	<a href="http://www.bla21f.net">www.bla21f.net</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	environment, sustainable development
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	Baltic 21, UBC
Members and actors	local authorities, represented by official contact persons, non-official stakeholders based in the region

The Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum (BLA21F) is a network of experts from local authorities, NGOs and various other organisations around the Baltic Sea who share a dedication to sustainable development. The Forum was founded at a working seminar in Lahti, Finland, in September 1997, where more than 70 participants from 9 countries of the Baltic Sea region committed themselves to the development of the network. It has been established to implement the Rio Process at the local and regional level and thus to strengthen and support Local Agenda 21 processes in all eleven countries in the Baltic Sea Region. A special emphasis is given to the countries in the eastern part of the region. BLA21F is not a short term project but continuous action to encourage the local level to carry out sustainable development and to find out means to protect the Baltic Sea. BLA21F aims at creating an active co-operation network to put the Rio Process into practice. BLA21F network has a national contact person in each country. Contact persons together with associate contact persons form the steering committee of BLA21F. They are also co-ordinating the work of BLA21F in the respective countries. The actors in the network are local authorities and stakeholders involved in LA21 processes, such as NGOs and other organisations, business and local people interested in LA 21 work.

The official keywords of the network are: awareness raising, public participation and responsibility. In practice these aims are carried out by co-operation, experience exchange and training as well as dissemination of methods and examples of good practice. The idea is to develop and integrate new ideas and approaches according to the local needs and local actors. Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum has been appointed as the Responsible Actor of Baltic 21, Joint Action 7 (JO 7): increasing consumer awareness of sustainable development. JO 7.1. focuses on Local Agenda 21 projects to increase public awareness of sustainable development. In this connection BLA21F lead the project 'Awareness Raising on Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region - a contribution to localising Baltic 21'. In order to increase public awareness on sustainable development, the project addressed all stakeholders involved in LA 21 processes in the BSR: local authorities, interested citizens, educators, business, consumer groups, local organisations and institutions. Furthermore, the BLA21F is networking with the Union of Baltic Cities to carry out the Joint Action 4 of Baltic 21: city co-operation and sustainable development issues in cities and communities.

### *Baltic Ports Organisation (BPO)*

Acronym	BPO
Founding year/launched in	1991
Website	<a href="http://www.bpoports.com">www.bpoports.com</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	maritime issues, business, competition
Organising principle	loose structure
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	port operators and users

The BPO was established in October 1991 in Copenhagen, based on the main objective of facilitating co-operation between the ports around the Baltic Sea Rim and to provide for the productive use of the new possibilities for shipping that emerged in the region after the fall of the Berlin wall and the demise of the Soviet Union. More than fifty ports based in the BSR are full BPO members. In the first phase of its existence, the Western European ports played a leading role within the organisation, transferring knowledge to the East, and thus, disseminating important know-how (e.g. on market economy and business thinking) to the newly independent Baltic States. In the course of the 1990s, and not least, through the Baltic accession process, this situation has changed decisively. The Baltic ports have undergone a process of remarkable structural change. One of the major aims of the BPO is to improve the competitiveness of maritime transport in the BSR by increasing the efficiency of ports, promoting the region internationally as the strategic logistics centre in Europe and by improving the infrastructure within the ports and the connections between them. It seeks to enhance co-operation among the port users and operators, to introduce and apply new technology in the port sector, to improve the performance and the integration of ports into the transport chain, to enhance cost efficiency, good environmental behaviour, organisational development, co-operation with authorities and interest groups.

### *Baltic Rim Network (BRN)*

Acronym	BRN
Founding year/launched in	1999
Website	<a href="http://www.baltic-rim.de">www.baltic-rim.de</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	business, competition
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	various non-official actors, mostly business partners

The Baltic Rim Network seeks to support various project partners with their entry into and opening-up of new markets. It provides hands-on help, purposeful activities and supra-regional presence in order to help various stakeholders with placing their products and service international competition. The network promotes its competence by emphasising its experience in product marketing, good personal contacts and an

internet-supported communication platform they are able to quickly introduce cooperation participants to new products and potential business partners from the Baltic Sea market. Today, the association brings more than 400 representatives from companies, NGOs, teaching and research institutions, local and regional authorities together. The overall aim of the BRN is to establish an environmental Market Place in the BSR – networking ecologically aware companies and promoting the technological transfer and the development of clean products and production processes.

#### *Baltic Sea Business Advisory Council (BAC)*

Acronym	BAC
Founding year/launched in	1997
Website	<a href="http://www.chamber.se/bac">www.chamber.se/bac</a>
Governance model	embedded advisory body
Policy field	economy, business
Organising principle	intergovernmental/state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	embedded in the CBSS structure
Members and actors	seconded national experts

The BAC is not to be seen as a self-standing organisation. It is an advisory body that is embedded in the wider institutional framework of the CBSS. The primary aim of this council is to give advice on economic and business matters to various bodies in the CBSS. The representatives are nominated by national business organisations and appointed by each government. BAC tries to speak on behalf of the business communities in the BSR. It reports to the annual meeting of foreign ministers of CBSS as well as to other relevant ministerial meetings. BAC actively participates in the work of the CBSS Working Group for Economic Co-operation (WGEC). It also holds close working contacts with other CBSS units, most importantly with the CSO and the secretariat etc.

#### *Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA)*

Acronym	BCCA
Founding year/launched in	1992
Website	<a href="http://www.bcca.de">www.bcca.de</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	business
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS, UBC
Members and actors	private companies

The BCCA serves to unite the Chambers of Commerce of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The BCCA was established in June 1992 in Rostock-Warnem/Germany in order to give the business community of the region a united voice for common concerns. The BCCA represents more than 450 000 companies belonging to all sectors on the Northern and North-Eastern European markets. The task BCCA is seeking to fulfil is threefold:

- to protect and uphold the interests of private entrepreneurship by advising policy-makers in business related affairs,
- to offer services to the business community and
- to provide facilities for contacts, debates and meetings in the region.

The BCCA General Conference is the BCCA's highest authority that is entrusted with the negotiation and adoption of the annual working program. It convenes on an annual basis. Members are entrusted with one vote each, irrespective their Chambers' number of individual member companies. These meetings are chaired by an elected Presidium, consisting of the president and four vice presidents. The BCCA Presidium directs the association's activities in times between the annual conferences and is supported by an executive body.

*Baltic Sea Commission – Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (BSC-CPMR)*

Acronym	BSC-CPMR
Founding year/launched in	1996
Website	<a href="http://www.cpmr.org">www.cpmr.org</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	spatial planning, development, cohesion, environment, security, transport
Organising principle	intergovernmental/state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	BDF, BSSSC, CBSS, UBC, HELCOM
Members and actors	officials of sub-regional and local entities all Baltic Sea States (except Russia)

The 'Baltic Sea Commission' (BSC/CPMR-BSC) is one of the six regional commissions that together form the 'Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe' (CPMR). The CPMR is an umbrella association that brings together more than 150 regions across 26 European countries. Living and working in the periphery implies a set of difficulties that are common to all of those regions. Hence, the main objective of the CPMR is to ensure that EU institutions and national governments consider the specific interests that arise from their peripheral position. Moreover, the association aims at furthering transnational cooperation in and among these regions in order to enhance their assets.

"The idea is to achieve a polycentric Europe by promoting and coordinating actions that turn peripheries into large, integrated maritime units. [...] The CPMR is a powerful lobby defending the interests of more than 150 peripheral maritime regions."<sup>751</sup>

The CPMR was set up in 1973, after a group of political actors had identified the need for an initiative that would enhance the involvement of peripheral regions in European integration, decrease the disparities in competitiveness and promote Europe's maritime dimension. The basic structure of the conference provides commissions for each of the six major key areas in peripheral maritime Europe: the Atlantic Arctic, the North Sea, the Inter-Mediterranean (commissions founded in 1989), the Baltic Sea (founded in

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751 Official website of the CPMR [www.cpmr.org](http://www.cpmr.org) [26 November 2007].

1996), the Balkans/Black Sea, and the Islands Commission (the latter two founded in 2003). The CMPR is meant to provide a representative voice and to act as a negotiator in European integration matters. Since 1997, the CMPR disposes of a central office based in Brussels that is responsible for the direct contact with European key actors at both EU-institutional and governmental level.

The CMPR Baltic Sea Commission (CPMR-BSC) was founded in Kotka/Finland in May 1996 alongside the strategic principles of the umbrella association. The CPMR-BSC decided to put special emphasis on the promotion of a polycentric model for Europe by introducing an "alternative way of thinking in the Baltic Sea Area". At the moment, the CPMR-BSC brings 28 (maritime and non-maritime) regions from all Baltic littoral states (except Russia) together. The participating BSC regions are represented by actors at different levels of governance, mostly local and municipal entities (e.g. the Stockholm County Council [S] or the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia/Vaasa [F]). One of the general objectives of the BSC is to further co-operation and partnership networks in the BSR. However, there is a clear priority on enhancing the coordination between regional *authorities*, i.e. of popularly-elected bodies and entities. Sweden (10 participating regions) and Finland (8) both show a strong presence within the BSC. In late 2006, the BSC Secretariat was transferred from Lahti/Finland to the Swedish town of Visby on Gotland Island.<sup>752</sup> The BSC activities mainly deal with spatial development and planning, cohesion policy, human resources, environment, social welfare, economic growth, democracy and common security. Frequently, also EU enlargement is on the BSC agenda, since the commission considers itself as some sort of "first wave enlargement forum inside the whole CPMR".<sup>753</sup> The BSC has promoted a series of INTERREG III B and C project proposals with the status of "BSC projects". Moreover, it has been involved in the task force work on the development of the new HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

Generally, the BSC shows a very strong commitment to being an active source for proposals on EU policy making. Hence, most of its agenda points are directly related to the activities of EU institutions, or to specific EU policies. As for the focus of this study, the most important example in this regard is certainly the EU Northern Dimension (ND). The BSC member regions have shown considerable dedication to the development and implementation of the EU-ND. Generally, the BSC considers itself a hub actor between the regional or local and the European level.

In fact, in the course of 2006, the BSC has taken up a series of initiatives in order to enhance networking between different Baltic Sea organisations. On 31 May 2006, the BSC organised a co-ordination meeting that aimed at bringing different BSR associations together. On that occasion, Heads and Secretaries representing the Baltic Development Forum (BDF), the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC), B7 Islands, Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) and Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) discussed and decided about concrete co-operation proposals, e.g. regarding transport and infrastructure, environment, human resources and health, the Northern Dimension and the European Maritime Policy.<sup>754</sup>

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752 Gotland is also part of the CPMR Islands Commission.

753 See official BSC website [www.paijat-hame.fi/english/tasks/cpmr.htm](http://www.paijat-hame.fi/english/tasks/cpmr.htm) [26 November 2007].

754 See BSC Newsletter, Summer 2006, p.5.

### *Baltic Sea Forum – Pro Baltica (BSF)*

Acronym	BSF
Founding year/launched in:	1992
Website	<a href="http://www.baltic-sea-forum.org">www.baltic-sea-forum.org</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	economy, culture
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	companies, institutions, sub-regional entities

The Baltic Sea Forum was founded in Helsinki in 1992 as Pro Baltica Forum, a German Finnish non-profit organisation. It is the central part of a representative network of members from the business world, politics and administration. The Baltic Sea Forum is a private organisation which works closely together with a number of governments as well as with state-wide, regional and local institutions. The Forum renamed itself in 2003 in order to further emphasise its focus on the entire BSR even more clearly. The Baltic Sea Forum has representatives in Aarhus, Bremen, Brussels, Helsinki, Kaliningrad, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Münchenstein, Oslo, Riga, Schleswig-Holstein, St Petersburg, Stockholm, Tallinn, Vilnius, and Gdańsk. The BSF supports economic, political and cultural co-operation in the BSR. The Baltic Sea Forum has an extended network of members, representatives and partners from all fields of activity as e.g. economy, politics, culture, and science in the Baltic region and Central Europe. The organization is in permanent contact with governments as well as state, regional and local authorities and institutions in the Baltic States. The major strategic objectives of the association are to realise programs and objectives of the European Union, strengthen the Baltic economic region, create an independent platform for its members in order to exchange ideas, experiences, and opinions, initiate and encourage cultural exchange programs between the states, draft trend-setting recommendations to committees and institutions. These objectives are intended to be reached by organisation of conferences, meetings, and fora, an up-to-date networked with constant information exchange, co-operation with key positions and partners in the Baltic Sea States, participation in international projects, drafting and editing of publications. The BSF fosters international co-operation through the organisation of conferences, meetings and events relating to current economic, political and cultural topics, provision of information for members and interested companies and individuals, support of projects and publications, and emphasis on the EU ND Action Plan and the promotion of Public-Private-Partnerships.

### *Baltic Sea Healthy Cities Association*

Acronym	----
Founding year/launched in	1998
Website	<a href="http://www.marebalticum.org">www.marebalticum.org</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	health, environment
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	embedded in a WHO regional program for Europe

Members and actors

cities, city administrations, local institutions

Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association was founded in 1998 to promote Healthy Cities activities in the Baltic region. The goal of Healthy Cities is to make health and well-being a part of both the decision making and the activities of a city. It is a framework for the strategic planning, activities and assessment of a city. The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association is a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region. The European "Healthy Cities" movement is coordinated by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and has been carried out since 1987. WHO granted the status in September 2002 for four years (2003-2006). The re-designation of the Association as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region was confirmed in December 2006 for a next four year period (2007-2010). The work of the Association is targeted to all countries around the Baltic Sea, especially to

- the cities in the Healthy Cities network,
- the cities in the National Healthy Cities networks and
- cities/municipalities interested to join these networks.

The association aims to expand and reinforce the capacity of the WHO Centre for Urban Health and to support project cities and national networks. The Association acts as an extended operational arm of the WHO Healthy Cities programme by

- establishing close and frequent contacts with cities and networks,
- building a knowledge base of local needs, and
- drawing on the technical resources of the cities and countries in the BSR.

The terms of reference of the association are

- to support the cities in implementing WHO Healthy Cities goals,
- motivate new cities to join the networks,
- to build the capacity of health and well-being expertise on a local level by networking with appropriate institutions and organisations,
- to enhance the visibility of the Healthy Cities operations and communication,
- to built information system of best practices and the state of well-being in cities belonging to the Baltic Sea Region Healthy Cities networks, and
- to network with local, national and international health and well-being experts to share best practices and expertise.

The activity areas follow the Health 21 and Healthy Cities priorities in Europe, which are

- partnership building especially in integrated health development planning,
- city health profiling,
- governance and community participation,
- sustainable development and health as well as urban planning.

The everyday work of the office is conducted by The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Board, which consists of University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University, Social Insurance Institution of Finland, Turku School of Economics, and the City of Turku. The basic work is funded by City of Turku and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland. The Association work in close collaboration with City of Turku/Healthy Cities



Project. The members of the association are the City of Turku, the University of Turku, The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, Åbo Akademi University and Turku School of Economics and Business Administration. The member organisations of the association provide the expert services to support the goals of the Healthy Cities activities in the BSR.

*Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)*

Acronym	BSPC
Founding year/launched in	1991
Website	<a href="http://www.bspc.net">www.bspc.net</a>
Governance model	intergovernmental association
Policy field	environment, maritime security
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS, HELCOM
Members and actors	members from the national and various regional parliaments of the Baltic Sea States plus representatives of BSR-based NGOs; Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Poland as well as the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

The BSPC constitutes a parliamentary forum for the BSR. Its main objective is to develop cooperation among parliaments at the national and regional levels and to facilitate the multilateral dialogue on issues that are relevant for the region. Environmental topics and maritime safety are among the focal topics in this context. The first Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference was launched in 1991 upon Finnish initiative. Since then, annual parliamentary conferences are held every year on a rotating basis. Between the annual sessions, a Standing Committee provides for the monitoring of the implementation of resolutions that were adopted by previous conferences. The Standing Committee consists of eight members from the parliaments of the Baltic Countries represented through the Baltic Assembly, of the Nordic Countries through the Nordic Council, of Germany, Poland and Russia. This Standing Committee is also responsible for the organisation of the annual conferences. It decides the agenda and program in consultation with the host parliament. The institutional objective of the BSPC is directly linked to the CBSS, since it tries to build the parliamentary counterpart to the work of the governments in that framework. To this end, the CBSS chairman usually takes part in the annual BSPC and reports on the activities and achievements of the Council. The BSPC officially aims at strengthening the common identity of the BSR by way of close cooperation and coordination between national and regional parliaments, by trying to link to other important associations and cooperative structures in the region, and by providing a forum for debate and information exchange between parliaments and other organisations in the region or in other European regions.

All national and regional parliaments as well as international organizations in the Baltic Sea region send delegates to the annual conference. These are the national parliaments of the Nordic (including Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland) and Baltic countries, of Germany and Poland, the regional parliaments of Kaliningrad, Leningrad, Karelia,

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein, the local parliaments of the cities of Bremen, Hamburg and St Petersburg, the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Baltic Assembly, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The BSPC also holds an observer status in HELCOM. The Secretariat of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Cooperation is located in the Secretariat of the Nordic Council in Copenhagen.

*BSR Online Environmental Information Resources for Internet Access (BALLERINA)*

Acronym	BALLERINA
Founding year/launched in	n/a
Website	<a href="http://www.baltic-region.net">www.baltic-region.net</a>
Governance model	self-organising project
Policy field	environment, energy, transport
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	HELCOM, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, CCB
Members and actors	non-official project leaders

BALLERINA is an environmental database for the BSR. The initiative to establish the network structure originates from the United Nations Environment Programme. BALLERINA mainly focuses on the collection and upgrading of statistical information.

*Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC)*

Acronym	BSSSC
Founding year/launched in	1993
Website	<a href="http://www.bsssc.com">www.bsssc.com</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	comprehensive
Organising principle	intergovernmental/state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	high
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS
Members and actors	decentralised/subregional authorities

The Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation is a political network hosting decentralised authorities (i.e. actors at local or sub-regional level) in the BSR and it was founded in 1993 in Stavanger/Norway as a direct result of the foundation of the CBSS. BSSSC membership is voluntary and open to all subregions (regional authorities) of the Baltic Sea area that are immediately below the level of central government. The organisation adopted a new statute in early 2004 as the nature of the challenges faced in the BSR had changed in the course of its first decade of existence. The revised points of reference contain the following objectives:

- to act as a Pan-Baltic organization open to all regions around the entire Baltic Sea;
- bring added value to regional co-operation on every side of the Baltic Sea;
- promote and advocate the interests of the regions of the BSR to decision makers, such as national governments, the EU and globally;

- provide and disseminate expertise, best practice examples and implementation capacity with regard to BSR priority issues (mostly addressing national authorities and EU institutions).

Credibility, Knowledge, Visibility and Flexibility are the designated guiding principles for the organization. Its main organisational bodies are:

- Chairperson: elected by the board for a two-year period; external representative for the organisation and thus responsible for the relations with regional decision-makers and policy actors in the BSR (including collective actors such as the EU).
- Board: decision-making body of the BSSSC, consisting of two representatives from each of the BSR countries; responsible for the ongoing promotion of the organisation's political objectives and for the identification of priority areas. The political activities decided by the Board are based on a combination of the priorities expressed by the European Commission, the National Platforms and the CBSS.
- Secretariat: supports the Chairperson and the Board; responsible for administrative tasks, the organisation of current activities as well as for public relation issues.
- Ad hoc Working Groups: can be set up by the Board. Their main task is to collect information about certain priority issues. Presently there are five Working Groups dealing with the following topics: Agenda 21, Transport and Infrastructure, Northern Dimension of the EU, Youth Policy, Cohesion Policy.
- National Platforms: forums for regional governments, ensuring that the Board activities are in line with the interests of the respective sub-regions. The Board Members are responsible for the platforms in their countries, and ensure effective co-operation. Each Platform appoints a contact point to strengthen the administrative capacity of BSSSC.
- Reporter on Maritime issues
- Contact Point, Brussels: responsible for the interface with EU-institutions

The main working forum for the organisation is the annual BSSSC-Conference, which is – based on a rotating mechanism – held in one of the participating regions around the Baltic Sea. The BSSSC cooperates with European institutions and organisations and upholds close ties with other key organisations in the BSR. Even though the BSSSC operates on the sub-state level, it is still organised on intergovernmental grounds. It is directly affiliated with the CBSS, covering the respective local and municipal level. Also the BSSSC working groups work under the auspices of the CBSS. The BSSSC also holds a permanent observer status within the EU Committee of the Regions. It directly connects its political objectives to those of the respective Union policies, such as the Northern Dimension and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

#### *Baltic Sea Region University Network*

Acronym	--
Founding year/launched in	2000
Website	<a href="http://bsrun.utu.fi">http://bsrun.utu.fi</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	education, research, academia
Organising principle	loose pattern

Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	university administrations; Estonian Agricultural University, Kaliningrad State University, Kaunas University of Tech., Klaipeda University, Med. University of Gdańsk, Riga Tech. University, St. Petersburg State University, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Tallinn Tech. University, Tech. University of Gdańsk, University of Gdańsk, University of Latvia, University of Tartu, University of Turku, Warsaw School of Economics and Vilnius University.

The Baltic Sea Region University Network is designed as an umbrella organisation to facilitate and enhance co-operation between the signing parties. Cooperation in the framework of the network focuses on the following core areas:

- Baltic Studies and Baltic Sea Region studies;
- Distance Education and Open and Distance Learning;
- European Integration and European Studies;
- Institutional Management and Administration;
- Management Information Systems and Information Technology; and
- Regional Development.

The members of the network seek to enhance student mobility by offering student exchanges within the region. Mobility is also granted to academic staff, seeking to augment working cooperations within the network and to establish new channels for knowledge exchange. The network also supports that involved individuals get the opportunity to attend seminars, congresses and conference meetings with a specific region-related focus. Joint research projects form the most ambitious cooperation field within the network, aiming to promote both bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

#### *Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (BTC)*

Acronym	BTC
Founding year/launched in	1983
Website	<a href="http://www.balticsea.com">www.balticsea.com</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	tourism
Organising principle	loose pattern (with minor reference to nationalities)
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	BSR-based tourist companies and organisations

The Baltic Sea Tourism Commission is a non-profit organization with over 80 members based in the BSR. The idea of establishing such an organisation emerged at a Tourism Conference held in the Swedish town of Karlskrona in May 1981. In 1983 the association was formally established and given the name of Baltic Tourism Co-

operation, or BTC for short. At first, the administrative structure of the association was limited to a permanent secretariat based in Norrköping, Sweden. In 1992 it was decided to set up a 'Standing Commission' with representatives from all interested parties, including Tourist Boards - national, regional and local, transportation companies (air, rail, ferry and cruise), port administrations and tour operators outside the area. In 1996, the original label and name of the association was turned into the current Baltic Sea Tourism Commission.

BTC defines itself as a "result oriented marketing and networking organization." Its major aim is to promote tourism to and within the BSR. The main activities of the association can be divided into the areas projects and marketing. The marketing function includes free presentation of the members on the BTC homepage, presentation at selected fairs and trips for journalists and travel agents in the region. The annual BTC Travel Mart and Conference is the main networking event. By way of its activities and networking efforts the BTC seeks to pursue the following objectives:

- secure a wider recognition of the Baltic Sea region as a viable tourist destination;
- promote the regional identity and awareness to the media, the travel trade and the consumers;
- encourage a healthy development of sustainable and responsible tourism based on quality within the countries bordering the Baltic Sea;
- collate data and information on the region by all logical methods;
- initiate projects approved by the members;
- liaise with official and voluntary sources and organisations;
- promote the varied interests of its members by marketing and by providing member benefits such as networking opportunities at travel marts, exhibitions and conferences.

#### *Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN)*

Acronym	BASTUN
Founding year/launched in	1999
Website	<a href="http://www.bastun.nu">www.bastun.nu</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	trade, business, economy
Organising principle	loose pattern with reference to nationality
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	European Trade Union Confederation
Members and actors	trade organisations

The Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN) was established in connection with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) Congress in Helsinki in July 1999. The network consists of 22 organisations out of which 18 are members of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and 13 of the ETUC. BASTUN focuses on

- supporting the trade union organisations in the EU membership application process,
- trying to make the trade union voice heard to contribute to the implementation of the EU ND,
- promoting collective bargaining at the labour market,

- influencing the Council of the Baltic Sea States by putting forward joint demands in areas such as employment, education and social policy,
- formulating joint project applications to the EU and other institutions and foundations for financial assistance,
- supporting the trade union organisations in the countries in transition in organising, organisational structure, administration and financing,
- and utilizing state-of-the-art information technology, such as the Internet, for co-operation and exchange of information.

The permanent secretariat has recently been merged with the Stockholm based Council of Nordic Trade Unions. The network is involved in projects co-financed by the EU.

*Baltic Sea Youth Office and the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs (BYO/BSSYA)*

Acronym	BYO/BSSYA
Founding year/launched in	1980
Website	<a href="http://www.balticsea-youth.org">www.balticsea-youth.org</a>
Governance model	intergovernmental association
Policy field	education, culture
Organising principle	intergovernmental
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS
Members and actors	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden; represented by ministry officials

The BYO has been established in 1980 focussing on the intergovernmental cooperation between the Baltic Sea States in the field of youth affairs. It is based at the Regional Youth Council of Schleswig-Holstein (RYC SH), which provides for the infrastructural and administrative framework. The Working Group (WG) as the organisational core is responsible for the implementation of the corporate objectives, the promotion of a cross-sectoral approach while working on youth issues within the CBSS, for the arrangement of the annual work plan and budget; it functions as a forum for exchange of experiences available to the national ministries. Member states are represented by seconded officials from the ministries for Youth Affairs. The work of the office is strongly linked to the activities of the CBSS. The country holding the chairmanship of the CBSS also holds the chairmanship of the working group. Positioned within the WG there is an advisory group consisting of the representatives of the outgoing, present and incoming CBSS chair countries. It takes its decisions on the basis of the working plan of the Secretariat, acts as a special adviser to the Secretariat and stays in close contact with it. The Secretariat prepares WG meetings together with the advisory group and the hosting country.

*Baltic University Programme (BUP)*

Acronym	BUP
Founding year/launched in	1996
Website	<a href="http://www.balticuniv.uu.se">www.balticuniv.uu.se</a>
Governance model	transnational network

Policy field	research, sustainable development, environment
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	university administrations, other research institutions

The BUP is a network of more than 180 universities and other institutes of higher learning based in the BSR. It is coordinated by the BUP Secretariat situated at Uppsala University (S). The Programme focuses on questions of sustainable development, environmental protection, and democracy in the BSR. The aim is to support the key role that universities are perceived to play in a democratic society. This is achieved by developing joint university courses, and by participation in projects in cooperation with authorities, municipalities and others.

#### *Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)*

Acronym	CCB
Founding year/launched in	1990
Website	<a href="http://www.ccb.se">www.ccb.se</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	environment, sustainable development
Organising principle	loose pattern (with state references)
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	n/a
Members and actors	non-governmental organisations based in the BSR

In Helsinki, February 1990, non-governmental environmental organizations from the BSR countries united and established Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) in order to co-operate in activities concerning the Baltic Sea. CCB is a politically independent, non-profit association. At present, CCB unites 26 member organizations from Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. The CCB member organisations have over half a million members in all countries around the Baltic Sea. The main goal of CCB is to promote the protection and improvement of the Baltic Sea environment and its natural resources. Common denominators for the CCB network include seeking opportunities to encourage new and constructive approaches and engaging people to become part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Being an international network organization, CCB has the advantage of being able to work both at the international and national policy levels as well as with concrete field projects. CCB is politically unaffiliated and it works on a non-profit basis, operating primarily through lobbying, information, environmental education and other activities to raise public awareness as well as through the contribution to concrete co-operation projects in the field.

#### *Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)*

Acronym	CBSS
Founding year/launched in	1992
Website	<a href="http://www.cbss.st">www.cbss.st</a>

Governance model	intergovernmental association
Policy field	multi-sectoral engagement
Organising principle	intergovernmental, state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	high
Cluster/organisational links to	BDF, BSF, BCCA, BSSSC, BASTUN, HELCOM, VASAB 2010, UBC, CPMR-BSC
Members and actors	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, European Commission Ministers for Foreign Affairs

Founded in 1992 in order to create a regional forum for dialogue and coordination between the national governments of the Baltic Sea States. Norway and Iceland (since 1995) are also members, as is the EU by way of a Commission representative. Moreover, France, Italy, Ukraine, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the USA hold the CBSS observer status. The member states are represented by their Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Council convenes annually, at the end of each Presidency term. The Presidency coordinates CBSS activities and prepares the agenda for each Council meeting. Between the ministerial meetings, the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), formed by high-rank officials from the national Ministries for Foreign Affairs, serves as the main discussion forum and decision-making body, in accordance with the guidance received from the Council. Under the auspices of the CSO, there operate three working groups and two lead-country expert groups: Working Group on Democratic Institutions (WGDI); Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC); Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS); Lead Country for Civil Security; Lead Country for EuroFaculty-Kaliningrad.

Since 1998, the Council is supported by a permanent Secretariat based in Stockholm/Sweden, responsible for administrative and organisational tasks as well as for the implementation of the CBSS Communications Strategy and the maintenance of cooperative relations to other organisations in the BSR. Overall political guidance is provided by the Baltic Sea States Summits that, since 1996, gather the Heads of Government and a member of the Commission on a biannual basis. The CBSS has considerably backed the EU enlargement process. After the accession of Sweden and Finland, the CBSS agenda had gradually syntonised with the relevant EU policies. At first, the CBSS was meant to be of "traditional intergovernmental nature", and "should not be seen as a new formalized institutional framework with a permanent secretariat."<sup>755</sup>

The CBSS intends to serve as an umbrella organisation that facilitates coordination between various different regional organisations. To this end, the CBSS launched an internet portal (the so-called Baltic Sea Portal – [www.balticsea.net](http://www.balticsea.net)) in order to provide for innovative channels of knowledge and information transfer and to enhance cooperation and coordination between the collective actors and stakeholders based in and focussing on the region.<sup>756</sup>

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<sup>755</sup> Terms of Reference for the CBSS, adopted at the Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea States, 5-6 March 1992.

<sup>756</sup> For more information, see chapter "The Council of the Baltic Sea States" (p. 49-).



### *Hanseatic Parliament*

Acronym	--
Founding year/launched in	2004
Website	<a href="http://www.hanse-parlament.net">www.hanse-parlament.net</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	business, small and medium sized enterprises
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	n/a
Members and actors	non-official collective actors promoting SME

In September 2004, the association of the Hanseatic Parliament was founded in St. Petersburg. Members of the association are more than 30 Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Chambers of Skilled Crafts and other institutions who promote small and medium-sized businesses from all Baltic Sea States (Germany, Poland Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark). It is based in Hamburg, Germany.

- The goal is to help making Northeastern Europe an economic area and to orient its economic area especially to the concrete requirements of small- and medium-sized businesses, and thus, promote these businesses and the entire economic area as well as possible. It focuses on the following tasks
- strengthening of economic competitiveness of the BSR;
- development of an intensive cooperation with a high spatial identification;
- support of medium-sized economy and the skilled crafts, in particular all transnational activities and international cooperations;
- promotion of vocational training, education of businessmen and executives of the medium-sized economy in form of dual bachelor studies as well as further training;
- promotion of economic and cultural development in the partial regions of the Baltic Sea Region as well as support of the experience exchange and a cooperation orientated on regional strengths.

### *Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)*

Acronym	HELCOM
Founding year/launched in	1980/1992
Website	<a href="http://www.helcom.fi">www.helcom.fi</a>
Governance model	international regime
Policy field	environment, maritime issues
Organising principle	intergovernmental, state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS and other environmental associations
Members and actors	Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Finland, Latvia Lithuania, Poland and Russia as well as the European Commission

The Helsinki Commission (also known as the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission) is the governing body of the "Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area", also known as "Helsinki Convention" which was

signed in March 1974 by all of the Baltic Sea littoral states (Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia). Its main objective is to abate pollution of the Baltic Sea area caused by discharges through rivers, estuaries, outfalls and pipelines, dumping and normal operations of vessels, as well as through airborne pollutants. The Convention entered into force in 1980. In 1992, a second convention was signed in order to adapt to the new international circumstances. After ratification, this second Helsinki Convention entered into force on 17 January 2000. In contrast to the 1974 Convention, it also comprised the European Community as a contracting party.

The HELCOM budget is partly covered by the European Commission, the rest of the costs are provided by the contracting parties (except the European Economic Community). The HELCOM members have pledged themselves to take action against the pollution of the Baltic Sea. To that end, each of them must adopt specific measures, e.g. ensure the creation of adequate waste reception facilities, ban the dumping of waste in the Baltic Sea area, or prevent contamination resulting from exploration or exploitation of the seabed or the subsoil. Moreover, the contracting parties have committed themselves to science and technological research cooperation.

The HELCOM meets on an annual basis. It adopts recommendations on the protection of the Baltic marine environment that have to be considered in the national legislation of each contracting state. The chairmanship rotates biannually, according to the alphabetical order of its member states. HELCOM is a well-established institution that may be considered as the major point of reference for Baltic Sea environmental affairs on the inter-governmental level. It fulfils technical tasks, such as the central co-ordination in case of major maritime incidents and the conduct of permanent environmental monitoring. HELCOM conducts regular assessments of the status of the Baltic environment that serve as a basis for regional and international policy making. Thus, it also plays an important role in political terms: HELCOM evolves common environmental objectives whose implementation can have decisive impact on the latitude of national policy makers in the region. HELCOM aims at channelling the regional particularities into EU and global decision-making mechanisms. In order to strengthen the coherent appearance and adequate influence it tries to "reduce" the number of voices by way of sub-coordination among the relevant regional stakeholders (i.e. nation states and organisations). HELCOM maintains cooperative links to other regional organisations in the BSR. Most importantly, it is one of the major strategic partners to the CBSS. On many occasions, the two organisations hold stakeholder conferences to exchange views on BSR key issues and to develop common positions. HELCOM also involves all BSR stakeholders in the development of the 'HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan' that is required under the 'European Marine Strategy'.<sup>757</sup> HELCOM also participates in the 'Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Cooperation' (NDEP). In order to enhance the synergies between various processes and

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757 In late 2005, HELCOM decided to elaborate a comprehensive environmental strategy to restore the Baltic Sea, the so-called 'Baltic Sea Action Plan'. One its most important features is that it is being devised with active participation from all major stakeholder groups – from governments, through industry and NGOs, right down to individuals living on the shores of the Baltic Sea. In March 2007, a final stakeholder conference was held, before the Action Plan will eventually be adopted in October 2007. See HELCOM News, Issue 1-2/2006, p. 9. Official website of the HELCOM [www.helcom.fi](http://www.helcom.fi) [29 November 2007].

programs, to maximise the use of resources available within the BSR, and to avoid possible overlaps, HELCOM aims at formally linking its Baltic Sea Action Plan to the EU ND policy as from 2007.<sup>758</sup> After the EU enlargement in 2004, all HELCOM Contracting Parties (except for Russia) were covered by EU regulations such as the ‘European Water Framework Directive’ and the ‘European Marine Strategy’. This has partly changed the priorities of HELCOM in the sense that it focuses more on cooperation between the Baltic EU Member States and Russia, and on strengthening cooperation with Belarus and Ukraine.

#### *Heritage Cooperation of the Baltic Sea States*

Acronym	--
Founding year/launched in	1997
Website	<a href="http://baltic-heritage.net">http://baltic-heritage.net</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	culture
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	--
Members and actors	states, involving non-official experts Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden;

Was initiated by the Baltic Sea Ministers of Culture. Its establishment built on the awareness about the growing necessity of a platform and meeting place where the actors in the field of heritage management could meet and discuss topics across borders. This led to the idea of creating a kind of market place, a forum for knowledge exchange and for the establishment of cooperative contacts between the actors in the field. The working structure of the association consists of various working groups (Underwater Heritage, Coastal Culture and Maritime Heritage, and Sustainable Historic Towns), and a Monitoring Group formed by non-official representatives from all member states, whose task it is to promote and further develop the co-operation.<sup>759</sup> It is also responsible for the organisation of Cultural Heritage Forums on different topics. The main working method of the association is exchanging and spreading information on Cultural Heritage through the national bodies, identifying fields where Baltic Sea co-operation is needed, and the subsequent initiation and enhancement of networks through the arrangement of seminars and the production and dissemination of reports.

#### *Keep Baltic Tidy (KBT)*

Acronym	KBT
Founding year/launched in	1993
Website	no official website
Governance model	transnational network

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758 See HELCOM Heads of Delegation, 18th Meeting. Helsinki/Finland, 12-13 December 2005. HELCOM HOD 18/2005, attachment 2.

759 Russia does not have a representative in this body; in 2006, Iceland became part of the group.

Policy field	environment, sustainable development
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	Baltic 21
Members and actors	non-governmental organisations and initiatives

The network was established in 1993 upon a Swedish-Finnish initiative. Today, the network brings together various different organisations and associations based in the BSR (including members from Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Sweden) and dealing in particular with environmental issues, prevention of environmental degradation and the issue of sustainable tourism. The network organises ad hoc activities for the protection of the Baltic Sea environment (such as cleaning beaches after major accidents) as well as information campaigns about maritime pollution. The network seeks to provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge and it aims at enhancing awareness about the ecological sensitivities of the region. It arranges conferences and workshops on an irregular basis bringing together non-official representatives from all member countries. They are organised in the following national associations: Keep the Estonian Sea Tidy (Estonia), *Håll Skärgården ren* (Finland), Keep Latvia Tidy, Friends of the Earth Latvia (Latvia), Lithuanian Fund for Nature (Lithuania), Keep St. Petersburg Tidy (Russia), *Stiftelsen Håll Sverige Rent* (Sweden). The Swedish Foundation 'Keep Sweden Tidy' (*Stiftelsen Håll Sverige Rent*) builds the formal link between the network and its participation in the realisation of the Baltic 21 agenda.

#### *ScanBalt*

Acronym	--
Founding year/launched in	2002, former Baltic BioTech Forum
Website	<a href="http://www.scanbalt.org">www.scanbalt.org</a>
Governance model	transnational network
Policy field	(bio)technology and research
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	BDF
Members and actors	important actors in the field of biotechnology (e.g. university networks, life science industry)

ScanBalt was founded in 2003, following the dissolution of the Baltic Bio Tech Forum, with the overall aim of ensuring that North European Life Science and Biotechnology realises its potential for global competitiveness. It defines itself as a "mediating and coordinating network without formal power" whose strength depends on the strength of the individual networks participating. ScanBalt seeks to achieve this through the creation of a new 'metaregional' structure, which brings together regional and national expertise into one coherent, transnational, organisation. ScanBalt members are networks between universities, biotech/life science industry, hospitals and other actors in the biotech/life science arena. It coordinates existing networks and organisations and stimulates the creation of new ones. Therefore, it labels itself also "the network of networks". ScanBalt acts in a de-centralized manner, which is also reflected in its low degree of institutionalisation and its loose organisational design. The structure of the

association consists of an Executive Committee and a Secretariat. The secretariat participates in a number of funding activities. The ScanBalt secretariat produces a monthly overview of the most relevant EU calls and EU news, which is then published in ScanBalt news. The objectives of ScanBalt are to

- Create a corporate identity for the ScanBalt BioRegion,
- Develop visibility for ScanBalt BioRegion and the members of ScanBalt,
- Attract human, industrial and financial resources,
- Coordinate joint efforts in research, education, technology transfer, innovation and economic development,
- Provide a platform to facilitate dialogue and collaboration between networks, academia, hospitals, public authorities, private companies and individuals,
- Create a platform to facilitate dialogue with supra-national institutions.

ScanBalt hosts a number of activities, and a number of funding sources are involved. At the international level, ScanBalt is presently receiving funding from the European Commission, the Nordic Innovation Centre and the Nordic Academy for Advanced Study (NORFA). At the national/regional level, ScanBalt is presently involved in a number of projects with partnership based co-financing. In April 2005, ScanBalt and the Baltic Development Forum (BDF) launched a partnership for cooperation and coordination. A significant element of this partnership is about turning ScanBalt into a stakeholder in the Baltic Sea Initiative 2010, a vision that intends to build up a forum for discussing the challenges and possibilities for improving competitiveness in the BSR.

#### *Social Hansa*

Acronym	--
Founding year/launched in	1992
Website	<a href="http://www.social-hansa.de">www.social-hansa.de</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	social policy, employment
Organising principle	loose pattern
Degree of institutionalisation	low
Cluster/organisational links to	UBC
Members and actors	social organisations

In 1992, Social Hansa was founded under the patronage of Björn Engholm, based on an idea developed by Carl-Einar Jørgensen from Copenhagen, who has been an active honorary member to this day. In 1999, the office was officially moved from Kiel to Lübeck. The aims of Social Hansa are to support the cooperation between social organisations by means of common projects, in particular with the new EU member states in the Baltic Sea Region. This includes the convergence of different structures and cultures as well as forming a network in order to fight against poverty Europe-wide. Today, the association consists of 71 members coming from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway. There is a close cooperation with other organisations and institutions working on an international basis (most importantly, the International Council on Social Welfare – ICSW). Social Hansa seeks to contribute to giving the social dimension in BSR politics and social interaction more appreciation

within social and economic policy across borders, because that is what it perceives to build the basis for successful economic relations. After a longer period of uncertainty about the persistence of the association, it has been re-launched in March 2005.

#### *Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)*

Acronym	UBC
Founding year/launched in	1991
Website	<a href="http://www.ubc.net">www.ubc.net</a>
Governance model	transnational association
Policy field	multi-sectoral engagement
Organising principle	state-centric
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS, BSSSC, EU, Council of Europe
Members and actors	cities situated around the Baltic Sea, represented by local and municipal officials. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden (Belarus, observer)

The UBC was founded in 1991 with the declared aim of promoting and strengthening cooperation and exchange of experience between the cities in the BSR. It seeks to advocate for common interests of the local authorities in the region, and to act on behalf of the cities and local authorities in common matters towards regional, national, European and international bodies as well as to achieve sustainable development in the BSR with full respect to European principles of local and regional self-governance and subsidiarity. The UBC brings more than 100 cities in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden (Belarus is involved with two cities, functioning as observers) together and seeks to cover many functional fields in its cooperation. In order to obtain these objectives the UBC intends to

- Seek a systematic exchange of experience between member Cities in their common fields of interest by organising meetings, exhibitions, scientific and popular sessions as well as other events to popularise achievements of the individual member Cities.
- Support and assist the member Cities in carrying out research work and publish their efforts to tackle the problems of the Baltic Sea and the adjacent land areas.
- Promote interest in the history of the Baltic Region, its ecological and cultural heritage and work together to protect the Region's landscape as well as its cultural and historical monuments.
- Enhance inter-human contacts, particularly, among the youth of the member Cities by organising meetings, sport competitions, festivals, and other events.
- Assist in and support the cooperation of professional group in the member Cities as well as that between individual Cities, for example, Twin Cities.
- Launch initiatives and cooperate with the BSR governments and international organisations in resolving problems posed by economic development of the Baltic Sea Region and protection of its natural environment, thus enhancing its integration.
- Foster communication ties and develop respective networks with other regional actors;

- Stage on public forums common motions, opinions and positions on the cities' and the Baltic Sea Region' s interests;
- Collaborate in the process of European Union enlargement, bearing in mind the existence of the European dimension to the future of the cities;
- Service its member cities in terms of information flow and help generate projects co-financed by EU, and other sources, offering cities project quality consulting;
- Develop its own public relations program.

The organisational structure of the association consists of the Presidium, the Executive Board and the Secretariat (situated in Gdańsk, Poland) as well as 13 Commissions covering specific functional areas (energy, business, culture, education, environment, health and social affairs, gender equality, sport, tourism, transport, urban planning, information, youth). The General Conference is the highest decision making body of the UBC and it convenes every second year in a UBC Member City. The UBC maintains formal ties with the European Union and with the Council of Europe, and it is closely affiliated with the CBSS and the BSSSC. The Union of the Baltic Cities is one of the few organisations that still emphasise the common heritage and the close to historic tradition of Baltic Sea cooperation. The UBC promotional material is among the most enthusiastic and visionary. In the context of its foundation in 1991, the organisers created the image of *Homo Balticus*, a specific human breed that is said to inhabit the Baltic Sea coastal area.<sup>760</sup>

#### *Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea 2010 (VASAB 2010)*

Acronym	VASAB 2010
Founding year/launched in	1992
Website	<a href="http://www.vasab.org.pl">www.vasab.org.pl</a>
Governance model	intergovernmental association
Policy field	spatial planning
Organising principle	intergovernmental
Degree of institutionalisation	medium
Cluster/organisational links to	CBSS
Members and actors	states, represented by ministers (and involving also non-official actors) Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Belarus

VASAB 2010 was founded in August 1992 in Karlskrona/Sweden, when ministers from 10 Baltic Sea States decided on the development of a document titled "Vision and Strategies for the Baltic Sea Region 2010".<sup>761</sup> It should contain an outline of the spatial development perspectives in the BSR and offer a useful basis for further enhancement and coordination of spatial planning policies with a regional focus. The respective works started in late 1992, and were successfully completed in 1994. Together with the final version of the document, the ministers of the contracting states also adopted an implementation program that stressed the role of co-ordination between national and

<sup>760</sup> For a critical discussion of the concept, see chapter "The Tale of Homo Balticus" (p. 55-) in the main section of the study.

<sup>761</sup> Norway was among the contracting parties but seized to be an active member in 2003.

cross-Baltic spatial planning, bilateral and multilateral partnerships in project promotion, intensified exchange of experience, and transfer of know how and spatial research in areas of common interest promotion. The institutional structure of VASAB 2010 consists of the Committee on Spatial Development (CSD), responsible for the overall co-ordination of common actions, and a supporting Secretariat based in Gdańsk/Poland. Generally, VASAB 2010 can be regarded as an intergovernmental entity, even though it does not exclusively involve state representatives. Germany and Russia, for example, also participate through representatives from the regions adjacent to the Baltic Sea. Belarus is represented through a non-official actor, the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning (IRUP).<sup>762</sup>

VASAB 2010 fulfils the function of an umbrella association that aims at bringing different BSR-based initiatives on spatial development together. However, VASAB strictly follows the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. it leaves action to other organisations, whenever it is deemed profitable as for the official VASAB objectives. VASAB restricts its activities to issues that require a strong transnational element. In many cases, it acts as a mediator and communicator between the local and the national level. Moreover, VASAB cooperates with other cross-Baltic initiatives. As a lead partner in Baltic 21 it is closely linked to the CBSS. The CBSS in turn gives regular incentives for the further development of the VASAB initiative: On its 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Session held in the Polish town of Szczecin, the CBSS encouraged the Ministers for Spatial Planning to update the vision of long-term territorial development of the region together with the relevant regional stakeholders within VASAB 2010.<sup>763</sup> The association is closely (though not officially) affiliated with the EU, and her spatial policies respectively. VASAB produces policy recommendations on various spatial issues. The current priority areas were laid down in the "VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme", adopted in 2001.

- Co-operation of urban regions on key issues of sustainable development
- Strategic development zones important for transnational integration within the BSR
- Transnational transport links important for cross-BSR and cross-Europe integration
- Diversification and strengthening of rural areas
- Development of transnational green networks, incl. cultural landscapes
- Integrated development of coastal zones and islands.

The European Commission has shown substantial interest in the VASAB 2010 initiative. In fact, some projects emerging in the VASAB framework obtained INTERREG support. As the European Commission adopted the European Spatial Development Perspective (E.S.D.P.) in 1999, VASAB 2010 was officially considered "a first step towards formulation of a long-term framework for co-operation in many areas."<sup>764</sup> VASAB has substantially contributed to the preparation of the Baltic

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762 For more details on the activities and projects of the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning, see the official IRUP Website <http://irup.by> [30 November 2007].

763 See Communiqué from the 13th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, held in Szczecin/Poland, 9-10 June 2005. Official CBSS website [www.cbss.st](http://www.cbss.st) [19 November 2007].

764 European Commission: E.S.D.P. European Spatial Development Perspective. Towards Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Territory of the European Union. Agreed at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning in Potsdam, May 1999, p. 79. The E.S.D.P. is a non-binding strategy document that aims at ensuring a balanced and sustainable development of the Union territory in accordance with the basic objectives of Community policy, i.e. economic and



INTERREG II C and III B operational programs.<sup>765</sup> In its Gdańsk Declaration, adopted in September 2005, the VASAB addressed the EU with a set of concrete recommendations for future spatial policy strategies.<sup>766</sup>

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social cohesion, knowledge-based economic competitiveness complying with the principles of sustainable development, and the conservation of diverse natural and cultural resources.

765 INTERREG IIC was launched in 1996 as a new type of action in trans-national co-operation in the sphere of spatial development within the EU. INTERREG IIIB was launched in 2000, it placed special emphasis on the integration of remote regions.

766 See Gdańsk Declaration, adopted on the 6th Conference of Ministers for Spatial and Development in the BSR, Gdańsk, 19 September 2005. Available on the official VASAB website [www.vasab.org.pl](http://www.vasab.org.pl) [30 November 2007].

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